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36.

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DIALOGUES

ON

P O P E R Y : 21

BY JACOB STANLEY.

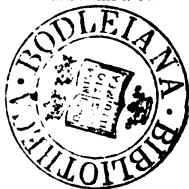
"THUS have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

MATT. xv. 6.

"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

REV. xxii. 18.

SECOND EDITION.



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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

WHEN the author published the first edition of these Dialogues, he acted on the conviction that Popery is at once hostile to the spiritual interests, and to the civil liberties, of the community. He regrets that he is compelled to say, that this conviction has recently been greatly deepened. He is aware that the modern advocates of the Roman Catholic religion loudly declaim against intolerance and bigotry, and assert the inalienable right of every one to worship God according to the conviction of his own mind; by which liberal professions many have been deceived, and induced to look upon Popery as at least exceedingly harmless, if not also eminently Christian. But such statements are completely at variance with the whole history of the Papal Church. Her garments have been drenched in the blood of those "that were slain for the word of God,

and for the testimony which they hold." In her crusades against the Albigenses and Waldenses; in her repeal of the Edict of Nantz; in the horrible massacre of the French Protestants; in the fires of Smithfield, Oxford, Gloucester, Hadlow, and elsewhere, during the infamous reign of that faithful daughter of the Papal Church, the execrable Mary; and in the ten thousand victims who have been immolated in her inquisitions;—in all these her intolerant and sanguinary character is written as "with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond," and "graven in the rock for ever."

"True," it is replied, "such was Popery once; but she is not so now, but, on the contrary, breathes nothing but charity and goodwill to all who dissent from her." What, then, has the infallible, and therefore immutable, Church changed? Where is the evidence that any such change has taken place? Public opinion has indeed chained the tiger, but its nature is still unaltered. In proof of this, the author refers the reader to "Den's 'Complete Body of Theology;' a work originally published by the University of Louvaine, and which was re-published in Ireland, in 1808, as being especially approved of and recommended by the Roman Catholic Prelates of Ireland; and again, in 1832, with an additional volume, under the especial sanction and approval of

Dr. Murray, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin." In this work all Protestants are denounced as heretics, who may not only "be compelled by corporeal punishment to return to the Catholic faith," but may "justly be punished with death." So much for the modern cant of the catholic spirit of Popery!

And what shall we say of its impurity? According to Den, who is quite in agreement with a popular Popish book of devotion, entitled, "The Garden of the Soul," the questions proposed by the Priests in private confession to their devotees are so shamefully indelicate, as to make it morally impossible that they should be otherwise than mischievous.

But enough of Den. The author believes Popery to be the same in character that it ever was; intolerant, impure, deceitful, superstitious, and idolatrous,—an awful apostacy from the truth, which substitutes a puerile and ridiculous ceremony for spiritual worship, and places religion in penances and pilgrimages, rather than in sanctification through the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Encouraged by the recent acts of the Legislature, the Romanists are exerting themselves with great zeal to make proselytes. Where ignorance reigns they have in some instances succeeded, especially where conversion to Popery was the stepping-stone to temporal advantage.

For men of piety and sound intellect the author entertains no fear; for, though he has watched the operations of Popery many years, he never knew one of this class embrace its dogmas: but he perceives the danger to which the less pious and intelligent are exposed, and is anxious to preserve them from becoming its victims.

“His object,” to repeat the concluding lines of the preface to the first edition, “is to prevent the progress of what he believes to be the vilest corruption of Christianity. In accomplishing this, he has met fearlessly and fairly the most potent arguments he has been able to select from the writings of the advocates of Popery. He has weighed it in the balances of Scripture, Reason, and Antiquity, and in each has found it wanting.

“He now commits the work to the candid examination of the Public, and to the blessing of that God who has graciously given us the holy Scriptures to make us wise unto salvation.”

London, Feb. 26th, 1836.

DIALOGUE I.

ON PURGATORY AND INDULGENCES.

Paul and Murphy.

Paul. HAVE you seen the Bull of Pope Pius the Seventh?*

Murphy. Indeed I have; and it rejoices my heart as much as if I had drunk six noggins of whisky.

Paul. And what is there in it to produce such ecstatic delight, Murphy?

Murphy. In it! Why, for sure, there is every thing in it that a good Christian could wish for. You know I am no Melchisedek, but that I had

* The Plenary Indulgence sent by Pope Pius VII. to Dr. Moylan, Bishop of Cork, granted on the 14th of May, 1809, and published in Cork in the year of our Lord 1813, as appears by the following extracts from the Doctor's Pastoral Address:—

“BELOVED BRETHREN,

“ANIMATED with the warmest desires of promoting your eternal welfare, we resolved immediately on completing our cathedral chapel to establish a Mission in it of pious exercises and instructions, for the space of a month; and in order to induce our bre-

a father, and a mother, and a grandfather, and a grandmother, like other Christians. And good Catholics they were too, as ever the sun shone upon;—except that now and then the dear

thren to attend thereat, and to profit by those effectual means of sanctification, we applied to the Holy See for a solemn Plenary Indulgence, in the form of a Jubilee, which the Holy Father was most graciously pleased to grant by a Bull, as follows :—

“ ‘ Pius VII., by Divine Providence, Pope, grants unto each and every one of the faithful of Christ, who after assisting at least eight times at the holy exercise of the Mission, (in the new cathedral of Cork,) shall confess his or her sins with true contrition, and approach unto the holy communion; shall visit the said cathedral chapel, and there offer up to God, for some time, pious and fervent prayers for the propagation of the holy Catholic faith, and to our intention, a Plenary Indulgence, applicable to the souls in purgatory by way of suffrage, and this in form of a Jubilee.’ ”

“ Such, beloved brethren, is the great, the inestimable grace, offered to us by the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Prepare, beloved, prepare your hearts to receive the fulness of the divine mercy: it is offered to all; let no one refuse to accept of it. Let sinners by its means become just, and let the just by it become more justified. It is written, God will hear us in the acceptable time: surely this holy time of Indulgence must be that most acceptable time. Those days of grace and mercy must be the days of your salvation. Ah! profit of them; be reconciled to your offended God. If you neglect this grace, if you suffer this holy time of Indulgence to pass without profiting by it, there is every reason to fear that the time of God's mercy shall pass away from you, never more to return. Behold, the treasures of God's grace are now open to you! The Ministers of Jesus Christ, invested with his authority, and animated by his Spirit, expect you with a holy impatience, ready to ease you of that heavy burden of sin under which you have so long laboured. Were your sins as red

cratur and they were rather too intimate ; at which times they would be a little quarrelsome, and would curse and swear, and tap the crowns of any who came in their way with their shill-laghs. But though these things were not quite as they should have been, yet they got through life, with the help of the Priest, very comfortably ; for at any time he would quiet their consciences by granting them absolution

as scarlet, by the grace of the absolution and application of this Plenary Indulgence, your souls shall become white as snow, &c.

“ Wherefore, dearly beloved, that you may all know that which, according to the Bull of His Holiness, is necessary to gain the benefit of this Plenary Indulgence, granted in form of a Jubilee, you will observe,

“ First, That it will commence in the new cathedral chapel, on the first Sunday in Advent, being the 28th day of November instant ; and continue to the festival of St. John the Evangelist, the 27th day of December. Second, To gain this Plenary Indulgence, it is necessary to be truly penitent ; to make a good confession, &c., according to the above Bull and intention of our holy Father the Pope ; five Paters, and five Aves, and a Creed, to the above intention, fulfil the above obligations. Thirdly, All Priests approved of by us to hear confessions, can, during the above time, absolve all such persons as present themselves with due dispositions at confession, in order to obtain this Plenary Indulgence from all sins and censures reserved to the Holy See, or to us ; they enjoining on such persons as are thus absolved a salutary penance.

“ We order this Pastoral Letter and Instruction to be read in every chapel of our diocese, in town and country, at every mass, on Sunday, the 14th, the 21st, the 28th of November instant, and on Sunday, the 5th of December next. Given at Cork, Nov. 2, 1813.”—Ouseley’s *Old Christianity*, pp. 177—179.

for all their sins for three or four tenpennies, more or less, as the nature and degree of the offence might be. But since their death, the poor souls have been in purgatory, where the Priest tells me they are most miserably scorched with fire, and in great torment. And to relieve the poor dear creatures I have had many masses said for them, for which the Priest has received many pounds; yet after all I could never learn that they were much relieved. But the Holy Father's Bull—O blessed Bull!—grants them deliverance from the flames of purgatory, on condition of my saying for them five Paters, five Aves, and the Creed, for four succeeding Sundays. If this were all, is not this sufficient almost to make a good Catholic leap out of his skin? But this is not all; for by saying these Paters, and Aves, and the Creed, and by going eight times to the new cathedral at Cork, and there with contrition confessing my sins to the Priest, I shall obtain a Plenary Indulgence, that is, a complete deliverance from all sins and censures: and die when I may, my spirit shall immediately fly away to paradise, without so much as being singed by the fire of purgatory. Now, is not this enough almost to make a man frantic with joy?

Paul. Then, Murphy, do you really believe that there is any such place as purgatory? and that your forefathers are frizzling there? and

that the Priests can continue them in, or let them out, as they please ?

Murphy. Indeed I do believe the whole and every part of it.

Paul. But will you tell me why you believe it ?

Murphy. Why I believe it ? Why, if I did not believe it, I should be a heretic ; and then I should go farther than purgatory, and fare worse ; for without doubt I should be damned everlastingly.

Paul. I perceive, Murphy, you are a strong believer, and that you have given implicit credence to what your Priest has told you about the certain damnation of all heretics, that is, of all Christians who are not within the pale of the Romish Church. But have you no other reasons for believing this than the mere assertion of your Priest ?

Murphy. Yes, I have ; but before I assign them I wish to know why you say “the *Romish* Church,” and not “the *Roman Catholic* Church,” which is the name we always give it.

Paul. My reason is simply this,—because I am not an Irishman.

Murphy. I don't know what you mean. I wish you would explain yourself.

Paul. I mean no offence, Murphy ; but you know your dear country has the reputation of being famous for bulls, and the term “Roman

Catholic” is a complete bull : it is equal to saying “a particular universal,” which you know is absolute nonsense ; for if it be “particular,” it cannot be “universal ;” and if it be “universal,” it cannot be “particular.” It would not be more absurd to say an “Irish Englishman,” a “French Scotchman,” an “American Asiatic,” or an “African European.”

Murphy. Well, I’ll not contend about it, as I see it is not your intention to insult my Church, but will now proceed to give you my reasons for believing in purgatory. Well, then, my first reason for believing in purgatory is, that it is taught in the Bible.

Paul. Will you tell me in what part of the Bible, that we may examine the passage or passages together ?

Murphy. I will. The first proof for purgatory to which I refer you is 2 Maccabees xii. 43, 44 : “He” (Judas) “made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin-offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection : for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.” Now what think you of the doctrine of purgatory ? Does not this prove it with the clearness of a sunbeam ?

Paul. Are you aware, Murphy, that the book to which you refer is no part of the Bible?—that the Jews, to whom were committed the lively oracles, never gave it a place in the sacred canon?—that in the primitive church it never was included among the inspired books?—and that even your own Church never pronounced it divinely inspired till the Council of Trent so determined it? a determination which they found necessary, to preserve a doctrine which, more than any other, enriches the Priesthood, and reduces the people to a state of the most abject bondage to the Priests.

Murphy. You surprise me! I always understood it was as much inspired as any book in the Old Testament; and that the Jews and Christians always had it in their Bibles. Are you quite sure they had not?

Paul. Quite so. No Romanists ever pretended that this book was included in the Jewish Scriptures; but, on the contrary, they have admitted that the Protestant canon of Scripture agrees exactly with the Jewish. And if you will consult Eusebius, you will find that in the different catalogues of the sacred books given by that historian, not one of them includes the Maccabees. But were it canonical, it would not be in favour of purgatory, which is only designed, according to the Romanists, for those who have not died in mortal sin; whereas those

for whom prayers were to be offered, being idolaters, died in mortal sin, and therefore would not be sent to purgatory, but to hell.

Murphy. Well, I confess I doubt whether purgatory can be proved by such a questionable authority.

Paul. No, Murphy ; you may as soon prove it from the adventures of Jack the Giant Killer, or the history of Tom Thumb. Will you favour me with your other proofs ?

Murphy. My next proof is Matt. xii. 32. The passage runs thus,—“ Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” You will not attempt to deny that this is canonical Scripture ; and if canonical, the doctrine of purgatory is built upon a rock which all the heretics in the world, and all the gates of hell, will never be able to shake.

Paul. Softly, softly ; not quite so fast. I admit the Gospel of St. Matthew to be holy Scripture, and this passage to be a part of it : but whether the organs of vision in me be defective, or to what other cause I am to ascribe it I know not, but I cannot in this text see a stone six inches thick, much less an impregnable rock, on which to build purgatory.

Murphy. I wonder at you : to me it is as plain as A B C. Does it not clearly imply that though *this* sin is not to be forgiven in the world

to come, other sins may?—But where can this be but in purgatory? In heaven no forgiveness is needed, and in hell none will be granted; it must therefore be in purgatory.

Paul. I remember seeing this argument in a work entitled “The Papist misrepresented and represented;” a work most artfully written, and remarkable chiefly for its apparent candour, and for its unblushing effrontery in asserting with the greatest confidence things to be true, which every student in Theology and Ecclesiastical History knows to be false. But let us examine the text. You will admit that Jesus Christ cannot contradict himself; and that, if an interpretation be given of any passage which is at variance with the plain and obvious meaning of other passages, such interpretation must be erroneous, and therefore should be rejected. Now I undertake to prove that the interpretation you have given of this text is at variance with the doctrine of Christ, and therefore must necessarily be false. In John viii. 21—24, our Lord positively asserts, that none who die in their sins shall come after him, but, agreeably to his doctrine in Luke xiii., must perish. Now, if all who die in their sins are excluded from the hope of being with Christ, and are doomed to perdition, then it follows that no forgiveness is administered in the world of spirits; that no moral change takes place upon them, but that

"he that is filthy must be filthy still." Purgatory is either for those who die in their sins, or for those who are already cleansed from them by the blood of Christ. But it cannot be for the latter; for they are already purified: neither can it be for the former; for they, our Lord has positively declared, shall perish, and where he is they "shall never come." It is not for the Christian believer; for he "rests from his labour," and enters, not into purgatory, but into rest. (Rev. xiv. 13.) He departs, and is at once with Christ; for "being absent from the body, he is present with the Lord," not in purgatory, but in paradise. Neither is it for the sinner, whether a member of the visible church or not; for, dying in sin, where Christ is he cannot come, but in hell he will lift up his eyes.

Murphy. Yes, I grant that *great* sinners—men who die in mortal sin—must perish; but little sinners—men who have committed only venial sins, men who are too good for hell, and not quite good enough for heaven—must go to purgatory to have the black spots burned out.

Paul. Will you tell me, Murphy, whether those words of our Lord, "Ye shall die in your sins," and, "Except ye repent, ye shall perish;" and those inspired declarations, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and, "The wages of sin is death;" with many other texts of a similar

kind;—will you tell me whether these refer only to some particular sins, or whether they are not applicable to *all* transgressions of the law? for “sin is the transgression of the law?”

Murphy. I have been accustomed to think all these relate to great or mortal sin; for it does not seem reasonable that little sinners should be punished everlastingly.

Paul. Unscriptural and diminutive views of the evil of sin lie at the bottom of your doctrine of purgatory, as of many other errors which have crept into the Christian church. If sin be a little thing, then indeed it would be very cruel and unjust to punish the sinner for ever; for what wise Government would transport a man for life, or hang him, for robbing a hen-roost? But the Bible no where speaks of little sins: sin, *all* sin, (for the distinction between *mortal* and *venial* sin, the Scriptures know nothing of,) “is the transgression of the law,” of that law, the breaker of which is accursed. Away, then, with your idle and heathenish distinction of mortal and venial sins! for whatever be the sin, whether reputed among men great or little, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Now, as our Lord neither came to destroy nor to contradict the law, nor to contradict himself, the interpretation which you and your Church have put upon this passage must be false.

Murphy. Well, I must acknowledge that though my Priest has often told me that mortal sins deserve hell, but that venial sins may all be removed in purgatory, yet I never met with any thing of the kind in the Bible, which, since the controversy between Protestants and Catholics has revived, I have read with some degree of attention. I, indeed, never seriously doubted the doctrine; but I concluded that the distinction, though not directly taught, was obviously implied in the text quoted from St. Matthew. But now, to be ingenuous, I more than half believe that all who die unpardoned and unsanctified must perish for ever; I now think that I have mistaken the meaning of the passage in question, and shall feel much obliged if you will inform me how you understand it.

Paul. It is sometimes more easy to show what a passage does *not* mean, than what it *does*. That it cannot mean purgatory, I think has been sufficiently established. This being settled, I feel little anxiety in reference to the various opinions which have been adopted by critics and commentators. In the judgment of some, it is a mere proverbial expression, signifying that the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall *never* be forgiven: others understand from it, that this sin shall be punished in both worlds, both here and hereafter: whilst others consider the expression, "this world and

the world to come," as signifying the age or dispensation of the law, and the age or dispensation of the Messiah,—the former then existing, and the latter soon to commence; and infer that our Lord meant that for the sin of which he was then speaking there was no pardon under either the Mosaic or the Christian dispensation. As you desire my own opinion, I will freely give it. I embrace all of these views: that it is a proverbial expression; that neither the law nor the Gospel provides for its forgiveness; and that God will punish it in both worlds. Are there any other texts which you think are in favour of purgatory?

Murphy. There are one or two more which I thought in favour of it; but the scriptures you have adduced against the doctrine, and your arguments founded on those scriptures, incline me to think that purgatory is a mere fiction which has no foundation in the Bible, but has been borrowed from the fables of Heathenism. I, however, should be glad to hear how you explain those texts to which I refer, in which we Catholics have always thought purgatory to be taught. The first of these is 1 Cor. iii. 15.

Paul. I know the text; the words are these: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: yet he himself shall be saved; yet so as by," or through, "fire." To understand the meaning of the Apostle, it will be ne-

cessary to read the preceding context: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." It was St. Paul's glory, that he preached the Gospel where it had never been preached before. His Epistles abound in allusions to this. "I have planted, Apollos watered:" "So have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." In the passage under consideration he alludes to the same thing: "I have laid the foundation;" that is, he had proclaimed redemption through Christ's blood from the curse of the law, and free and complete justification from all things to all that believe. Such were the doctrines he preached wherever he went,

and such was the foundation he laid. But he was followed by others who, whilst they believed and taught eternal salvation by the death of Christ, instead of building upon that doctrine the obligation of all believers to obey the precepts and to imitate the holy example of Christ, exhibited it as superseding all obligation to personal holiness ; who, under the pretence of magnifying the grace of Christ, made void the law, and opened the flood-gates of licentiousness ; and who, instead of exhorting them to walk in Christ as they had received him, attempted to improve and embellish Christianity, by mixing it up either with the antiquated rites of Judaism, or with pagan philosophy, (Col. ii. 8,) or pagan superstition, teaching the worship of angels, (Col. ii. 18,) with many other absurdities, such as your Priests teach you. He then goes on to say, that a time would come when truth and error should be clearly distinguished ; when the latter should be destroyed, as wood, hay, and stubble are consumed by fire ; while the former, being indestructible, like gold and precious stones, should remain uninjured. But though what they added to the simple doctrines and duties of Christianity was worthless and false, (for which therefore they will receive no reward,) yet if they, amidst all this error, rested their hopes of salvation alone upon the Redeemer, they should be saved,—

but scarcely saved ; saved with as much danger and difficulty as a man who escapes out of a house in flames.

Murphy. So then, if I understand you correctly, the Apostle is speaking only of Priests and their doctrines. If so, then all except Priests may dismiss their fears about purgatory.

Paul. Yes, Murphy, and Priests too ; for it is their works, and not themselves, that shall be burned. If Priests, whilst they sincerely desire to do good, through invincible ignorance propagate opinions which are at variance with the truth, and introduce customs which are opposed to the simplicity of Christianity,—even they shall be saved. But should they teach errors, knowing them to be such, and corrupt the simplicity of Christian worship from unholy motives,—which there is great reason to fear is the case with most of your Priests,—then they, as well as their works, will be destroyed ; for they shall have their portion with hypocrites, (Matt. xxiv. 51,) and liars, in the lake which burneth for ever and ever. (Rev. xxii. 15.)

Murphy. You say, if a Priest be a sincere believer in Christ, but through ignorance teach doctrines which neither Christ nor his Apostles ever taught, though *he* shall be saved, yet his doctrine shall be burned up. Will this be done by material fire ?

Paul. I hope you will not be offended, Murphy, but you really remind me of a young gentleman, a lunatic, I knew many years ago, who thought that material fire would burn up all error, but that truth being indestructible, the fire could not act upon it. This thought occurred to him one morning when reading in his study; and being determined that nothing but truth should have a place in his library, whether historical, theological, legal, or scientific, he piled his books one upon another, and set fire to them; and had it not been for the timely interference of the family, the whole house would have been in flames. Can you, Murphy, think you, put a candle to a thought or a wish, and set it on a blaze?

Murphy. No, for sure, nor any body else. The thing is perfectly absurd and ridiculous. I perceive then that the whole is figurative, and not literal; and that as the hay and stubble, which fire easily destroys, are figurative representations of error, so the fire, by which error at last shall be destroyed, is a figurative representation of the effect which truth shall produce in that day when every thing shall be exhibited in its proper character.

Paul. What now has become of your purgatorial fire?

Murphy. Become of it? Why, you have put it quite out, without leaving as much as would

light a match, or burn a piece of tinder. But I have heard the Priest speak of something, which the blessed St. Peter says about souls being in prison, and their being released by the prayers of the church, that is, the prayers and masses of the Priests. I should like to hear what you have to say about this prison.

Paul. The passage to which you refer is 1 Pet. iii. 18—20, and reads thus: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." What is there in this passage in favour of purgatory?

Murphy. I now begin to think, after all you have said, that there is such a place as purgatory: for from this text is it not quite clear, that there is a prison for souls in the other world; that spirits are in that prison; and that Christ, after his crucifixion, went and preached to them? Now, if this be so, does it not most clearly demonstrate that there is a purgatory?

Paul. A purgatory, Murphy! Why, where is your fire, man? Here is a prison, but no fire. For any thing you can tell, it may, in-

stead of being so hot as to frizzle its inhabitants, be so cold as to freeze them. But seriously, this text no more teaches the doctrine of purgatory, than it teaches phrenology. The persons to whom Christ preached were the *antediluvians*. The questions on this subject are, *when* did he preach to them, and *where*? He preached to them during the period of God's long-suffering, while the ark was preparing, by his Spirit in Noah, the preacher of righteousness; the same divine Spirit by which, after his crucifixion, he resuscitated his body, and of which he said by Noah to the antediluvians, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The Spirit of Christ was not only in Noah, but also in all the Prophets: hence St. Peter, in the eleventh verse of the first chapter of this Epistle, says expressly, that the "Spirit of Christ was in them."

Murphy. Well, this seems very plausible; but the persons to whom he preached are called spirits, and they were in prison. Now does not this mean that they were disembodied spirits, and in a prison in the other world?

Paul. No, Murphy, it no more means that they were disembodied spirits, than Moses, when he prayed for rebellious Israel, and addressed Jehovah as "the God of the spirits of all flesh," (Num. xvi. 22,) meant that the Israelites were disembodied spirits; or than the writer of the Epistle

to the Hebrews, when he says, "Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. xii. 9,) meant that himself, and those to whom he wrote, were disembodied spirits. It is a part of the man put for the whole,—a mode of writing of which there are numerous examples in the Scriptures, as well as in other compositions.

Murphy. Well, I cannot deny this; for though I confess my ignorance of the Bible in general, never having ventured to read it till lately,—having always been taught by the Priest that it is a most dangerous book,—yet, in addition to the texts you have quoted, I remember others of a similar kind. But you have said nothing about the prison: is not that in the other world?

Paul. Your Priests in general say so, though not all; for Father Calmet, who, like your other Fathers, believed in Christ's visit to the middle region, honestly says, "We may doubt whether this be the meaning of St. Peter in this place." Indeed were this to be admitted, it would prove nothing in favour of purgatory; for here is no fire; here is neither prayer nor masses for the poor souls;—and what soul was ever delivered from purgatory without these being both said and paid for?—and, were there both prayers and masses, and fire, the persons to be delivered were only those who had been disobedient "in the

days of Noah," and had *perished in the flood*. Not a soul who has departed this life since the flood could, on supposition that Christ had, after his crucifixion, visited the nether regions, derive any advantage from that visit; for it was neither made to postdiluvians, nor to devils, but to the antediluvians only. That the persons to whom Christ preached were in *prison*, is beyond all doubt, for the text affirms it; but whether they were in prison when Christ preached to them, is not affirmed. It is most probable that the meaning of the passage is, "Quickened by the Spirit, by which Spirit also, speaking in Noah, (2 Peter ii. 5,) he preached to the persons now in prison:"*—unless we suppose, which is by no means improbable, that God having condemned the antediluvians for their vile abominations, and threatened to sweep them from the earth by a mighty deluge, one hundred and twenty years before the event took place,—during the whole of that period, "as criminals tried and convicted, they are represented as being in prison, detained under the arrest of divine justice, which waited either for their repentance, or the expiration of the respite, that the punishment pronounced might be inflicted."† Now it was whilst they were in this state, that the Spirit of Christ in Noah preached to them.

* Macknight.

† Dr. Adam Clarke.

Murphy. Well, I confess that purgatory has not a leg left on which it can stand. But pray, seeing that it has no foundation in the Bible, whence has the notion been derived? and how is it that the Church has always believed it?

Paul. Its origin is neither Patriarchal, Jewish, nor Christian, but Pagan; and to the same parentage the other antisciptural peculiarities of Popery may be clearly traced,—a fact which, as we successively discuss them, I trust I shall establish, not only to your conviction, but also to the confusion of their most interested and zealous advocates. Are you acquainted, Murphy, with the writings of Plato, or Homer, or Virgil?

Murphy. No, indeed; I never read a line which was written by any of them. Pray who were they? Were they Popes or Cardinals?

Paul. No, Murphy, they were superior to both; they were philosophers and poets, the great teachers of both Popes and Cardinals, and to whom the Priests in the self-called “holy Catholic Church” are under eternal obligation, for the discovery of a country in which they have found an exhaustless mine of gold,—I mean purgatory,—by which the coffers of their Church are filled.

Murphy. What, and did not the philosophers and poets discover this rich mine?

Paul. They did not. Rome was not built in a day. Every age makes its own peculiar discoveries : our own, you know, is remarkable for its steam-engines, its air-balloons, and its gas-lights. Besides, poets, who chiefly dwell in the regions of imagination, are not so likely to find mines of gold, as Popes and Cardinals, whose souls are of a more earthly mould, and who, to borrow the language of St. Paul, “mind earthly things.” The philosophers and poets discovered the country ; but Popes and Popish Priests alone have worked the mine. Plato informs us in his “Phædon,” that there is a river named Acheron, (which, diving through the earth, falls into the marsh, called from it, the Acherusian lake,) “whither all souls repair upon their departure from this body ; that they are led thence to be tried and judged ; and that those who are found to have lived neither entirely a criminal, nor absolutely an innocent life, are sent to the Acheron. There they embark in boats, and are transported to the Acherusian lake, where they dwell and suffer punishment proportionable to their crimes ; till at last being purged and cleansed from their sins, and set at liberty, they receive the recompence of their good actions.

“Those whose sins are incurable, and have been guilty of sacrilege and murder, or such other crimes, are by a just and fatal destiny

thrown headlong into Tartarus, where they are kept prisoners for ever.

“ But those who are found guilty of curable (venial) sins, though very great ones, such as offering violence to their father or mother in a passion, or killing a man, and repenting for it all their life time, must of necessity be likewise cast into Tartarus; but after a year’s abode there, the tide throws the homicides back into Cocytus, and the paricides into Phlegethon, which draws them into the Acherusian lake. There they cry out bitterly, and invoke those whom they have killed or offered violence to, to aid them, and conjure them to forgive them, and to suffer them to pass the lake, and give them admittance. If they are prevailed with, they pass the lake, and are delivered from their misery; if not, they are cast again into Tartarus, which throws them back into these rivers; and this continues to be repeated, till they have satisfied the injured persons.”* Such was the doctrine of Plato, the disciple of Socrates.

Murphy. Well, whatever Apostles and Prophets might be, it is quite clear that, as far as he went, he was an orthodox Catholic, and deserved to sit in St. Peter’s chair.

Paul. Yes, Murphy, very few of equal virtue have ever sat in that chair; but he was born

* Plato’s *Phædon*, p. 177. London edition, 12mo, 1763.

many hundred years before St. Peter's chair was thought of. Besides, he was a man of too much honesty to attempt to pick the people's pockets, by teaching them such an infamous lie, as that Priests, either heathen or Popish, could ever pray the poor souls out of purgatory. Had he therefore lived in the time of St. Peter's chair, he would have been one of the last men whom any college of Cardinals would have promoted to that antichristian elevation.

Murphy. But you say Plato was a philosopher; and you intimated that there were poets as well as philosophers who taught the doctrine of purgatory. Can you give me any passage from any of their accredited works which proves this?

Paul. Yes, I could give you several; but at present shall only give you one. You may find it in Dryden's *Virgil*, beginning at line 908: a passage which, except the money part, (for the poet did not know of the mine,) teaches the doctrine as luminously as it was ever taught by any Priest, or Bishop, or Cardinal, or Pope, in the holy Catholic Church. After stating that the soul, in consequence of its union with the body, becomes contaminated, he adds,

“ Nor death itself can wholly wash their stains;
But long-contracted filth e'en in the soul remains.
The relics of inveterate vice they wear;
And spots of sin obscene in every face appear.

For this are various penances enjoin'd ;
And some are hung to bleach upon the wind,
Some plunged in waters, others purged in fires,
Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires.
All have their manes, and those manes bear :
The few, so cleansed, to these abodes repair,
And breathe, in ample fields, the soft Elysian air.
Then are they happy, when by length of time
The scurf is worn away, of each committed crime ;
No speck is left of their habitual stains ;
But the pure æther of the soul remains."

You see, Murphy, the true origin of purgatory. You may search for it till doomsday before you will ever find it either in the Law, or the Prophets, or in the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, or in any of the apostolic writings ; but go into the regions of Paganism, the dark places of the earth, where idolatry, with all its obscene and cruel and beastly and degrading superstitions, abounds, and there you will find it, as in Popery, a prominent article of their faith. In Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian theology it has no existence ; but in Paganism and Popery it appears in all the bulk, and strength, and vigour of Goliath.

Murphy. The Israelitish army was never more frightened at Goliath of Gath, than I have been frightened at purgatory, where I always thought I should have to remain a long time after death ; for though I don't think myself more wicked than many of my neighbours, yet, as I

am comparatively a poor man, I cannot leave much behind me for the Priests to pray me out of purgatory; and without money, I know, though they profess to be very charitable men, they would not offer a single prayer for my poor soul, but would suffer it to frizzle till the day of judgment.

Paul. You remind me, Murphy, of a circumstance which occurred some years ago, not fifty miles from this place. A Protestant writer in a Birmingham newspaper affirmed, that Popish Priests took money for praying souls out of purgatory. A Popish writer, supposed to be the late Dr. Milner of Wolverhampton, or one of the senior Priests at O—— College, with all that confidence with which that order of men can affirm that which is false, or deny that which is true, whenever such affirmation or denial will serve their cause, flatly denied the charge. The Protestant writer knew that what he had said was perfectly correct, for he was no stranger to Popery; and therefore, that he might establish the fact, and convict the Popish writer of deliberate falsehood,—not by evidence from Popish countries, or from distant parts of our own,—had recourse to an expedient which immediately succeeded, to the great confusion of his antagonist. The expedient was this. He sent one friend of his to the College of O——, and another to a Priest at Birmingham, to in-

quire whether a few prayers would not benefit a deceased relative. He who went to the College found them very wary and cautious in their answers. He was taken from one Priest to another, till at length he was introduced to the head of the College. He, as well as the subordinate Priests, said that the deceased would most certainly derive great benefit from the Priests' prayers; but as the deceased was not a relative of the applicant, but of an Irish gentleman, whose servant he was on this occasion, he declined to offer any prayers till the gentleman himself should arrive. He was extremely cautious, and, from the many questions which he proposed, seemed afraid that a trap was laid for him. But the holy father at Birmingham was not so cautious: "Sir," said the applicant, "my grandmother, whom I much loved and revered, has been dead some time, and I have waited upon you to know whether a few prayers would be of any service to her." "O yes, of great service," was the reply. "Will you then have the goodness to offer a few prayers for her?" He offered four, when the applicant asked him what he had to pay. "Two shillings," was the answer. He gave him half-a-crown; when the Priest fumbling to find a sixpence, but without success, the Protestant told him he might keep the whole, and for the additional sixpence might say another prayer at his

leisure. Thus the deliberate falsehood of the Popish writer was made manifest.

Murphy. You really surprise me. Why, in my dear country every body knows that without money be given to the Priest to pray them out of purgatory, the poor souls have no chance of getting out at all. And hence, that poor people might not be cooped up in that dark, and dismal, and hot place, for ever, a Society was formed in the year 1810, called "A Spiritual Association in honour of the most Holy Trinity, and under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the relief of souls in purgatory." To this Society, poor people are urged to subscribe weekly; and, *so long as their subscriptions continue to be paid*, are entitled to all its spiritual advantages.

Paul. Can you tell me, Murphy, in their own words, what those advantages are?

Murphy. Indeed I can; for many a pound has that Society cost me, both for myself and my dead relations; and therefore you may be sure I know all about it. The words in which the advantages are expressed are these:—"At the death of any member, mass shall be said three times for the repose of his (or her) soul; masses shall be said every month for the deceased members of this Society in general: the standing intentions of this Society shall be, 1s^t, the soul most in need; 2d, the deceased

members ; and 3d, the welfare of the living subscribers."

Paul. Suppose a man, Murphy, be so poor as to be utterly unable to continue his subscription, what will be the consequence ?

Murphy. Why, now, I wonder at your asking such a question ! The case is a very plain one : for his poverty, his dead relations must remain where they are ; and when his poor soul shall quit its present habitation, it must go and bear them company ; and, deserted by the Priests, things must take their regular course, and the purgatorial fires must continue to burn their poor souls, till, as you say, Virgil the poet, that enlightened teacher of purgatory, expresses it,

" All the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires."

But I might as well have saved my money, and my poor countrymen might as well have saved theirs ; for I now see that neither Moses, nor the Prophets, nor Jesus Christ, nor the Apostles, knew any thing about this purgatory, but that it is a heathenish fiction, which Priests have introduced into the Church. Can you tell me when and why it was introduced, and how it became universally received ? I am told by my Priest that it is as old as Christianity, and that masses for the dead are very pious and profitable things. But, to confess the truth, I don't believe it is as old as Christianity ; for if it were,

Christ and his Apostles would have taught it : whereas they have said nothing about purgatory, but only about heaven and hell, the eternal dwelling-places of the dead,—the former for those who die in the Lord, and the latter for those who die in their sins.

Paul. You are right, Murphy : when we are once dead, the period of our probation is ended, the die is cast, our eternal doom is fixed, and we are at once either

“ With the damn’d cast out,
Or number’d with the blest.”

Then it is, “ He that is holy, let him be holy still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.” You ask *when* the notion of purgatory found its way into the Catholic Church. This, Murphy, is a question which it is not easy to answer; for Popish writers themselves are not agreed in this particular. The author of the “*Papist misrepresented*” says it was taught by St. Augustine, who, you must know, died in the beginning of the seventh century. Even he does not pretend to find it in the Church before that period. So that, were it admitted that Augustine taught the doctrine, as it cannot be carried higher than his time, it completely proves that it is not apostolical, and therefore not Christian, and therefore by all Christians should be rejected. Murphy, I attach very little

importance to what either St. Augustine or any other of their holy ones have said ; for they either do, or do not, agree, with the Scriptures : if the former, then I agree with them ; but if the latter, I pay no more deference to them than I do to the opinions of St. Mahomet, or St. Plato. But, after all, suppose I should be able to prove that St. Augustine, instead of teaching the doctrine of purgatory, taught the direct contrary, what would you think of the Popish writers who produce him as its advocate ?

Murphy. Why, for sure, I should think them no better than they should be ; and that, if there is such a place as purgatory, they should be sent to it to be soundly roasted in its fires, for telling lies and deceiving the people.

Paul. It is only a pious fraud, Murphy, to serve the Church ; and you know the intention is every thing ; and, if this only be right, the end will sanctify the means !

Murphy. So I have been taught ; but I confess I now begin to think that this too is a novelty which was not known in the days of the Apostles ; for the other day I was reading one of St. Paul's Epistles, where I met with the following passage, with which I was very much struck, and which led me to say, " Why, surely, the Jesuits and Priests of our Church never read this ; or if they have, they are a set of im-

pudent fellows for calling themselves the successors of the Apostles." The passage runs thus :—" Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, and not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

Paul. Yes, Murphy, if you test them by such passages as the one you have just quoted, you will annihilate their apostolical character. You might as soon prove that the bat is a descendant of the eagle, or that a mouse had a lion for its grandfather, as prove any family-likeness or relationship between those "pious-fraud men" and the Apostles. But now to the proof that Augustine, instead of teaching the doctrine of purgatory, taught the direct contrary. There was indeed a time when he manifested something like a desire to introduce this pagan fiction into Christianity,—a wish that it might turn out to be a true doctrine; and therefore he said, "that such a matter as a middle state for purgation might be inquired of." But after inquiring into this subject, he writes thus :—" We read of heaven and of hell, but the third place we are utterly ignorant of; yea, we find it is not in the Scriptures." And again: "Nor will any thing help thee, but what is done while thou art here. As the last day of man's life finds him, so the last day of the world shall hold him." And

once more: "Nor is there for any body any third place; for he who is not with Christ, must be with the devil." Such, Murphy, is the language of him who they say believed and taught the doctrine of purgatory. Did I attach much importance to human authorities on a subject of this kind, I could prove from the writings of many of the ancient Fathers, as they are called, that purgatory was no article in their creed.

The probability is, that purgatory and indulgences were introduced about the same time, the latter being dependent on the former; for take away purgatory, and indulgences are at an end. But when were indulgences introduced? They were first introduced in the eleventh century, by Pope Urban II., as a recompence for those who went in person to conquer the Holy Land. Bishop Fisher, the Popish Bishop of Rochester, who lived in the time of Henry VIII., speaks of them as having been only recently known in the Christian Church. "Many," he says, "are tempted not to rely much upon indulgences, for this consideration, that the use of them appears to be new, and very lately known among Christians. To which I answer, it is not very certain who was the first author of them. The doctrine of purgatory was *rarely*, IF AT ALL, heard of among the ancients; and to this very day, the Greeks believe it not. Nor was the belief either of purgatory or indulgences so ne-

cessary in the primitive church as it is now. So long as men were unconcerned about purgatory, nobody inquired after indulgences. Take away purgatory, and there is no more need of indulgences. Seeing, therefore, that purgatory was so lately known and received in the Church, who will wonder, that in the first ages indulgences were not made use of?"

Murphy. I thought the whole Christian world had always believed in purgatory; but now I find that, according to Bishop Fisher, who is considered a martyr in the Catholic Church, it was rarely, if at all, known in primitive times. Indeed, the Bishop does not seem to believe that the primitive church knew any thing about either purgatory or indulgences; which he says were not so necessary in the primitive church, as now. And even in his time he says, "To this very day, the Greeks," that is, I suppose, the whole Greek Church, "believe it not."

Paul. Can you tell me, Murphy, why purgatory and indulgences were not so necessary in the fourteenth, as in the second, century?

Murphy. Indeed I cannot; for I have always been taught to believe that purgatory lay directly in the road to heaven; that there was no getting there without passing through it; that our bodies left a few stains upon the soul, which the fire of purgatory must burn out; and that even Popes themselves must be singed and

frizzled a little, as well as other poor sinners. I cannot conjecture why there should be any difference. I shall be much obliged if you will explain it.

Paul. This, Murphy, I shall endeavour to do. 1st, In primitive times believers were purified, not with the fire of purgatory, but with the blood of Christ; not by a long residence in the shades, but through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, in the present world. 2d, When believers died in primitive times, they immediately rested from their labours, and, like Lazarus, were carried into Abraham's bosom, where being absent from the body, they were present with the Lord; and when wicked men died, they immediately, like Dives, lifted up their eyes in hell. 3d, Though the mystery of iniquity began to work even in apostolic times, yet there were none in those days sufficiently paganised and impudent to attempt the union of this part of Heathenism with the doctrines of Christ. Besides, the Christian church, had such a degrading and demoralizing innovation been attempted in those times, would have held up the impiety and ignorance of the innovator to universal execration. 4th, But when a dark night of ignorance overshadowed the church; when scriptural Christianity was nearly lost by the populace, and when the Priests, except in a few instances, were as ignorant as themselves;

when the religion of Christ had been nearly superseded by the puerilities of a most contemptible and childish superstition; when from the Papal chair, through all the descending grades of the Priesthood, with here and there an exception, the vilest abominations were committed; when Priests, who, under pretence of greater sanctity, abstained from the honourable estate of matrimony, either openly kept concubines, or secretly, in the sacrament of confession, debauched their female votaries, or converted their nunneries into extensive brothels;—then it was, in an age eminently ignorant and corrupt, that indulgences were introduced, and then it was that faith in them was required.

Murphy. I suppose you mean to say, that none but knaves taught the doctrine, and that only fools believed it.

Paul. Yes, Murphy, I do. And whilst the knaves have profited by it, the poor fools have been most miserably fleeced. Many an honest simpleton has been robbed of his last shilling by the horrible tales which these unprincipled hypocrites have told of the sufferings of their fathers and mothers, and husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters, and so on; and whose sufferings could only be relieved by prayers and masses, neither of which could be obtained without money or without price. I could furnish a volume of anecdotes on this subject. Of all

swindlers, the most infamous, and the most deserving of the pillory, are those who swindle both poor and rich out of their money, under what they themselves know to be an infamously false pretence of delivering souls from a place in which they are not. The Priests themselves, in general, no more believe in purgatory than I do ; but, poor slaves, they are bound to *say* they believe as the Church does. Besides, this being a most, indeed the most, profitable article of their faith, they will cleave to it as long as the people will be gulled by them ; for put out the fire of purgatory, and away go indulgences, and private confessions, and absolutions, with all the profits arising from them.

Murphy. Indeed, I believe you. But for the fear of purgatory I never should have paid them a single tenpenny for any of their pardons, nor for any of my dead relations, who they told me would get out all the sooner, in proportion to the number of masses which were performed for them.

Paul. But, Murphy, you are a man of good sense ; how could you suppose that *they* could either pardon you or yours ?

Murphy. To tell you the truth, I often had many doubts about it ; but when I confessed these to the Priest, he told me it was wicked to doubt any thing which the Church taught, and enjoined a penance for my unbelief. This made

me more cautious in my confessions ; but still the doubts remained. For though he assured me again, and again, and again, that Christ had given a power to the Priests to remit temporal pains and penalties, I still doubted. When I looked at the Priests, who could drink whisky, and break the Sabbath, and curse and swear, and do other bad things, like some of the worst of their neighbours, I doubted. When I looked at the money they got for pardoning the living, and for relieving those they said were in purgatory, I doubted. When I read the table of indulgences, and saw the demoralizing effects of the whole system, I doubted. And especially since I read the New Testament, have I been haunted both night and day with doubts.

Paul. Ah, Murphy, you are as great an unbeliever as the Priests themselves, many of whom, according to Mr. Blanco White and others, are rank infidels. But will you tell me of what table of indulgences you speak ?

Murphy. And that I will. It is a table containing a list of prices for which certain sins may be safely committed. It is taken from "a book printed in Rome, in the year 1514, by the authority of the Pope, entitled 'The Tax of the Sacred Roman Chancery.' This book was afterwards printed seven different times at Paris, Cologne, and Venice ; and has since been translated into English, under the title of 'Rome a

Great Custom-house of Sin.' It informs the world for what price the pardon of heaven, and absolution, for particular crimes, might be obtained. For instance, pardon

	£.	s.	d.
For stealing holy things out of a consecrated place..	0	10	0
For a layman murdering a layman	0	7	6
For murdering father, mother, wife, or sister	0	10	6
For a Priest keeping a concubine	0	10	6
For burning a house maliciously	0	12	0
For forging the Pope's hand	1	7	0

Besides absolutions for crimes too shocking to be mentioned, from 9s. to £2 10s."*

Paul. Why, Murphy, this is horrible. Your holy Fathers and Popes at Rome have been a set of the most infamous panders to the most depraved of the human race. I was willing to hope that the Friar Tetzels exceeded his authority when he sold indulgences in taverns and brothels. But why should I have supposed this? for neither the Pope, nor any in authority, took any notice of his beastly proceedings, till they were made ashamed by the opposition of Luther. The money raised from the sale of indulgences by this holy Friar was immense; much of which was squandered away by him and his scandalous associates in drunkenness, gaming, and low debauchery. Did you, Mur-

* Earl Mount Cashell's Statement, page 28.

phy, ever hear of the manner in which he and his colleagues in that pious work proceeded?

Murphy. I never before heard either of him, or of his associates, or of their communications; but I feel curious to know something about them.

Paul. Your curiosity shall be gratified. Tetzel lived in Germany, in the time of Pope Leo X. The treasury of the Church had been much reduced by Leo's predecessors; and, being fond of splendour, and at that time engaged in building that magnificent structure, St. Peter's church at Rome; being also a great lover of pleasure, and a liberal rewarder of genius; he soon found himself involved in great difficulties; to extricate himself from which, he, among other methods for abstracting money from the pockets of a credulous multitude, had recourse to the sale of indulgences. Tetzel, a Dominican Friar, of infamous character, was an agent employed on that occasion. He described the benefits of these indulgences in the following language. "If any man," said he, "purchase letters of indulgence, his soul may rest secure with respect to salvation. The souls confined in purgatory, for whose redemption indulgences are purchased, as soon as the money tinkles in the chest, instantly escape from that place of torment, and ascend into heaven. The efficacy of indulgences is so great, that the most heinous sins will be

remitted and expiated by them, and the person be free both from punishment and guilt. The cross erected by the preachers of indulgences is as efficacious as the cross of Christ itself. Lo ! the heavens are open ! if you enter not now, when will you enter ? For twelve-pence you may redeem the soul of your father out of purgatory : and are you so ungrateful that you will not rescue your parent from torment ? If you had but one coat, you ought to strip yourself instantly, and sell it, in order to purchase such benefits." *

Murphy. Had you not said he was a German, I should have taken him for one of our own dear countrymen ; for sure, no two peas were ever more alike than the language of Dr. Moylan, our good Bishop of Cork, and that of Friar Tetzal. Tetzal says, "The efficacy of indulgences is so great, that the most heinous sins will be remitted and expiated by them ;" and Dr. Moylan says, "Were your sins as red as scarlet, by the grace of absolution and of this plenary indulgence, your souls shall become white as snow." Tetzal says, "Lo, the heavens are open ! if you enter not now, when will you enter ?" And the good Bishop, Dr. Moylan, says, "Behold, the treasures of God's grace are now open to you ! If you suffer this time of

* Robertson's History of Charles V., vol. ii., page 94, note.

indulgence to pass without profiting by it, there is every reason to fear that the time of God's mercy shall pass away from you." Surely Friar Tetzal must have been a predecessor of our good Bishop; or they must have been educated in the same school; or have written by the inspiration of the same spirit; or their souls have been cast in the same mould; or, at least, the German Friar and the Bishop of Cork must have been cousins-german.

Paul. Yes, Murphy, and I suspect the resemblance is correct in another particular also. The end proposed by the indulgences granted by Leo, and sold by Tetzal, was to raise money to defray the expenses of building St. Peter's church at Rome; and was not the Cork plenary indulgence granted for the purpose of raising money towards liquidating the expenses of building the cathedral chapel in that city? It is true, neither the Bishop nor any of his Priests sold indulgences in brothels; but did they not greatly increase their receipts from confessions? You know, Murphy, the delight you experienced in the anticipation of the promised blessings of this plenary indulgence, and with what readiness you were going to redeem the souls of your parents out of purgatory. Did you expect to redeem them without money?

Murphy. Redemption from purgatory without

money! What then do you think King Solomon was a liar?

Paul. King Solomon a liar, Murphy? Why, I have said nothing about King Solomon. What do you mean?

Murphy. I mean nothing more nor less than this,—that King Solomon said, “There is nothing new under the sun:” but deliverance from purgatory without money would be a new thing, and then you know King Solomon would have been a liar.

Paul. Now I understand you. Then you both expected to pay money, and were willing to pay it?

Murphy. Undoubtedly; nor I only, but all my Catholic neighbours also.

Paul. Do you think, Murphy, that without this plenary indulgence the Priests of that cathedral would have received, from Nov. 28th to Dec. 27th, one-tenth of what they actually did receive?

Murphy. No, nor one-twentieth.

Paul. Did it never occur to you,—for, in spite of your Priests, I perceive you have ventured now and then to think for yourself,—did it never occur to you that there is a singular discrepancy between the doctrine of St. Peter, and that of his successors? The former you know says, “Ye are not redeemed with such corruptible things as silver or gold, but with

the precious blood of Christ ;” whereas the latter teach that the money must tinkle, or the soul cannot escape from the fire of purgatory. Blood, without either money or fire, was the doctrine of St. Peter ; but his successors lose sight of the blood, and insist on the money and the fire, or, to speak more properly, the money *or* the fire ; for give the Priests plenty of the former, and the soul shall very soon escape from the latter.

Murphy. Yes, it has more than once occurred to me ; and, indeed, one Sunday, after mass was over, and the Priest and I were having a little whisky punch together at a whisky shop, I asked him how it was that blood redeemed our souls from hell, and money redeemed them from purgatory ? He looked rather displeased, and said, “ Murphy, it is not for you to inquire into the mysteries of religion : your business is to believe as the Church believes.” I knew it would not do to push the inquiry farther just then, and therefore waved it till we had drunk a little more whisky ; for he was a dear lover of whisky, and the whisky always made him very merry and loquacious. When I perceived the whisky had taken effect, I ventured to repeat my question ; to which he replied, “ Murphy, you devil,”—in this familiar way our Priests often address us,—“ Murphy, you devil, hear and mind what I say : I tell you

that Jesus Christ by his death has redeemed the souls of men from hell, and that he pardons all the mortal sins of Christians; but the little every-day sins of good people he does not forgive, but in kindness to his church, that is, to his Priests, he turns them over to them, that they may have it in their power either to send the offenders to purgatory, or to keep them out, as they please. Now this, Murphy, you perceive, produces subjection and obedience to us of the sacred order, their lawful Priests; for we are at once the object of the people's fear and hope. Besides, Murphy, it is a doctrine which is at once both pleasant and profitable;—pleasant to the poor souls to be delivered, and profitable to us their deliverers." To which I ventured to reply, "But it would be pleasanter still for the poor soul to go to heaven direct;—and, besides, it has always appeared very strange to me, that a man should be pardoned for high treason, and punished for petty larceny; that the greater, the infinitely greater, offence should be freely forgiven, whilst a mere trifling deviation from propriety should be visited with purgatorial fire." "Hold your peace, Murphy," rejoined the Priest; "these things are too deep for you. I am afraid you are beginning to play the heretic, through the exertions of those Bible-men and their Missionaries; but, by the blessed Virgin, I'll drive both Missionaries and

Bibles out of my parish." Perceiving him to kindle, I pursued my inquiries no farther.

Paul. Happy for you, Murphy, that you are protected by a Protestant Government! There was a time,—during the reign of the bloody Queen Mary, whose memory is held up to the execration of posterity,—when, had you given expression to such sentiments, they would have made you pass through the fire to Moloch, (the impious absurdities of Popery!) and, except you had recanted, would have sent your soul, not to purgatory, but to hell.

Murphy. On the subject of purgatory, I doubt no longer. You have fully convinced me that it is not in the Bible; that neither Moses nor the Prophets, Jesus Christ, nor the Apostles, ever taught it; that it is of pagan origin; that it never found its way into the Christian church, till both its Ministers and people had become exceedingly ignorant and depraved; that it is awfully demoralizing and debasing in its effects; and that purgatory and indulgences are twin daughters of the Apocályptic whore, by whose abominations their masters, the Priests, get great gain. I am therefore resolved not to make this lie my refuge, but to seek for pardon and a preparation for heaven in this life; which I am encouraged to hope for, not through my own sufferings, but through the sufferings of Him who died the just for the

unjust, whose blood cleanseth from all sin,—who took the penitent thief from the cross to paradise,—who has pronounced all who die in the Lord, happy,—and whose disciples have, in all ages, been blessed with a good hope through grace, that when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, they shall have a building above, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Paul. So then, the Bull of Pope Pius has lost all its charms with you.

Murphy. Indeed it has. And the money which I intended to give the Priest to pray my parents out of purgatory, I will now devote to other purposes. With a part of it I will buy a Bible, that I may read the word of God to my wife and children; with a second I will buy a few clothes for the family; and the rest shall be expended in mending my cabin, and making it water and wind tight against winter. Now, Sir, I must leave you; but I cannot do it without most heartily thanking you for the information you have given me. May every blessing attend you and yours for ever!

Paul. Thank you, Murphy; and I most sincerely implore the same blessings upon you and yours. I am thankful for your deliverance from the unscriptural and dangerous doctrine of purgatory. Read your Bible much, and pray much, and you will be led into all neces-

sary truth. And being delivered from error, endeavour to deliver others. Hate and abhor the antisciptural doctrines and practices of Popery; but love, and pray for, and instruct the Papist. Farewell, Murphy. May the Lord bless you, and make you a blessing.

DIALOGUE II.

ON TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

John and Patrick.

John. WHY in such haste, Patrick? You could not walk faster were you going for a doctor, or marching from a Sheriff's officer, or on your way to a prize fight, or to the Catholic Association, to listen to the eloquence of Messrs. O'Connel, Shiel, and Co., who form a bright constellation in our political hemisphere; and to whom the British empire, but especially our beloved country, the Emerald Isle, is under the deepest obligations for the peace and prosperity which it enjoys; and especially for that vigour and activity with which they have inspired all parties, rousing them on the right hand and on the left, from a political lethargy, either to hope or fear the scenes of 1798,—scenes, Patrick, which you and I both remember, and which will never be forgotten whilst

the names of Wexford-bridge, Arklow, and Vinegar-hill are remembered.

Patrick. I shall never forget them. They were bloody times ; but, though many of the Priests had much to do in that rebellion, I confess I could never cordially approve of all that was done.

John. The Priests, Patrick ! Yes, the Priests, if not the sole cause of it, were, many of them, among the most active of the rebels. Who but the Priests occasioned the horrible piking of Protestants at Wexford, and on Wexford-bridge ? They could have prevented the whole. One Priest, Father C——, at the intercession of a rich Popish lady, the wife of a Protestant gentleman, who was actually brought out to be piked, went down to the bridge and rescued him from the hands of the Popish savages. And had he used his priestly authority, he might have saved them all. Now, Patrick, I hold that the man who has it in his power to save life, and does not, is a murderer. But waving this at present, pray, where are you going in such haste ?

Patrick. I am neither going to hear the orators you mention, nor to see a prize fight, nor am I marching from a Sheriff's officer, but am hastening to mass. I am rather too late ; for last night Peter O'Flaherty, and Father Dominic, and a few others, and myself, met at the

sign of St. Joseph, where, the whisky being good, and the company agreeable to each other, we drank noggin after noggin, the good Father and others every now and then treating us with a glee, or a catch, in both of which he excels, till not a soul of us could go home without help. The consequence of which is, that I am later than I otherwise should have been. Nor, indeed, am I quite so well as usual; for though we sometimes say of whisky, there is not a head-ache in a bucket-full, yet, though I did not drink half that quantity, my head aches quite enough.

John. But, Patrick, are you in a fit state to go to mass?

Patrick. Who can doubt it? I am neither a thief nor a murderer. As to the whisky, the Priest drank as much as I did; and he will not only attend mass, but will solemnly celebrate it. Now, if he who celebrates it,—he who converts the wafer and the wine into the body and soul, the flesh and blood and bones, the divinity and humanity, of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and then swallows him with much solemnity,—if, I say, the Priest is fit for all this, surely I cannot be unfit to cross myself with holy water, and attentively to listen to prayers in an unknown tongue, and to bow to the paintings of the Saviour and his mother, and the other saints who kindly dwell

in the chapel, whilst they pray for us in heaven.

John. And do you, Patrick, believe the Priest can do all this ?

Patrick. Yes, as firmly as I believe that my namesake—if I may speak so familiarly of the great St. Patrick—drove all venomous reptiles into the sea.

John. Do you believe your Priest can make a mouse-trap ?

Patrick. I am not sure that he has genius enough for that. But what has that to do with it ?

John. Do you think he could build a ship ?

Patrick. I don't believe he could ; for that requires great strength, and he is but a feeble man ; it also requires great mechanical skill, to which I believe he is a stranger.

John. Do you think he could create a goose, or a goat, or a donkey ?

Patrick. To be sure not. I cannot conceive what you mean.

John. I simply mean what I say, Patrick. I am not speaking parables. Do you think he could in an instant transplant Dublin to Liverpool, and Liverpool to Dublin, with all their inhabitants, through the air, without a single individual being injured, or a single brick or tile being disordered, or a piece of furniture being moved ?

Patrick. I cannot comprehend what you mean: surely your honour has had a little whisky this morning.

John. No, Patrick, I have neither had whisky, nor any other liquor. I am perfectly sober, and perfectly serious; and I repeat that I mean simply what I say. Do you think your Priest can make Dublin and Liverpool change places?

Patrick. No more than you can. None but a lunatic could believe it.

John. Do you believe he could create a new planet, and at once fill it with inhabitants?

Patrick. To be sure not. I don't think he could create so much as a cabbage, or even a potato.

John. Do you think he could drink up the ocean at a draught, or swallow the moon, or eat for his breakfast the sun and all the solar system?

Patrick. If you are serious, your honour, you surely must take me for a fool.

John. No, Patrick, I know you on many subjects to be no fool, but a shrewd, and sensible, and clever fellow. But I confess you surprise me by the weakness and inconsistency of your faith. You say you don't believe your Priest can either create a planet, or transplant a city, or make a goose, or even a cabbage, or a potato, and that you doubt whether he could

so much as make a mouse-trap; and yet you believe that he can create the Creator of the universe; and having done this, that he can in a moment swallow Him who fills the immensity of space; and that he can not only create one Creator, but as many Creators as there are communicants,—every one eating and swallowing the Lord that made the heavens and the earth, with all that dwell therein. Now, your inconsistency lies in believing that he who can do this, cannot do every thing else.

Patrick. I am shocked at the irreverent manner in which you speak of this holy mystery of our religion. I don't know much of history; but I know this much, that if, instead of living when and where you do, you had lived in Spain or Portugal, or other Catholic countries, where Christianity is preserved in all its primitive purity,—for so I am told it is,—you would soon have been sent to the Inquisition, where you would have been stretched upon the rack, or perhaps been baked in a brass pan, for speaking so profanely and heretically.

John. You are right, Patrick: had I had the misfortune to be born in any of those nations of the faithful, I should have been frizzled long ago. Thus the faithful prove themselves the genuine successors of the Apostles, who wished to destroy the Samaritans by

fire, for refusing to permit Jesus to pass through one of their cities.

Patrick. I never thought of this before; but this is an argument in favour of the wholesome discipline exercised on heretics, which all the heretics in the world can never overthrow. The Apostles thought heretics should be burned; but the Apostles could not err; therefore to act on the judgment of the Apostles must be right. I thank you for this argument; for sometimes when Protestants have bored me with what they called the sanguinary cruelties of my Church, I used to be puzzled to answer them, but you have now supplied me with an answer which is resistless.

John. Quite so, Patrick. You will now be able to prove that they faithfully act upon the opinion of the Apostles, when that opinion was wrong, and copy their spirit, when that spirit was antichristian.

Patrick. Antichristian, Sir? What, the spirit of the Apostles antichristian? You almost make my hair stand erect, and curdle the blood in my veins. By the —

John. Don't swear, Patrick, either by the blessed Virgin, or any other saint, but exercise patience, and I'll convince you very soon that what I say is correct. Our Lord, when James and John said to him, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and

consume them?" turned and rebuked them, and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." The poor erring Apostles,—for then they had not received the Spirit of truth which was to lead them into all truth,—like your holy Catholic Church, would have burned the heretics at once; but Christ taught them better. That religion, Patrick, which destroys men's lives, is not the religion of Christ, but of him who was a murderer from the beginning. You charge me with speaking irreverently and profanely on this mystery of your religion; but have I not spoken truly? Is it not true that you believe that the Priest, by repeating a few words over the wafer, completely destroys its character as bread, and changes it into the body and soul and divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? and that by the same process he converts the wine into the real blood which once ran in the veins and flowed from the side and the temples of Jesus? Is it not true that you also believe that there is an entire Christ in every consecrated wafer; and that he who swallows the wafer, swallows Christ, his whole body and soul and divinity, that is, that he swallows Him who filleth both heaven and earth? Is it not true that though the Scripture tells us of but *one* Lord Jesus Christ, and informs us that he

was born of the Virgin Mary, and that after being crucified and buried, he was raised from the dead, and ascended on high, where he will remain till the restitution of all things, when he shall appear a second time, without sin, "a sin-offering," to receive his disciples to himself, that where he is there they may be also;—is it not true, I ask, that though the Scripture explicitly teaches all this, your Church professes to believe that the Priests can, and actually do, create thousands of Christs every day; and that each of those Christs is the identical Christ who was born of the Virgin, though it is known they were never born of Mary, but are all made of bread? Now, I ask, don't you believe all this?

Patrick. Yes, as firmly as I believe in the miracles of Prince Hohenloe.

John. Then why be displeased at my simply stating the truth?

Patrick. It was at your *manner* of stating it. I thought you meant to treat it with ridicule, and this roused my indignation.

John. With ridicule, Patrick! How could you imagine I would treat so serious a subject with ridicule? Though some of my questions and observations may appear rather ludicrous, yet believe me, Patrick, I am very serious in the whole business. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God, as well as man?

Patrick. To be sure I do: "He is over all, God blessed for ever."

John. Do you think, as God, he ever had a beginning?

Patrick. Impossible; for "He is *from* everlasting," as well as "*to* everlasting, without beginning of days, or end of years."

John. Is the Jesus Christ your Priest will make and eat to-day, from everlasting?

Patrick. You quite shock me!

John. Don't be so horrified, Patrick. When was that wafer made which the Priest will convert into the blood and bones, the human and the divine natures, of Christ?

Patrick. I suppose it was made yesterday. I believe the Priest, who was formerly a journeyman baker, made it himself.

John. Then the wafer is not from everlasting; and if not, then the Jesus Christ of which it is made cannot be from everlasting, nor a moment older than it, nor indeed so old by many hours, if, as you say, the wafer was made last night.

Patrick. Blasphemy! blasphemy!

John. Be calm, Patrick. Does it not then follow that, as the Jesus Christ of the Bible is from everlasting, and the Jesus Christ of the Priest's making is only a day old, they cannot possibly be the same?

Patrick. It is a mystery, neither to be understood nor explained.

John. Jesus, you say, considered in his divine nature, was without beginning.

Patrick. Most assuredly I do say so, and will maintain it too.

John. Then you will not say that there ever was a time when He who had no beginning began to be ?

Patrick. No, certainly ; for that would be a direct contradiction, and therefore impossible.

John. Exactly so. But your *wafer* Jesus Christ began to be but yesterday ; therefore it cannot be the Jesus Christ who had no beginning : and, consequently, you cannot believe these to be the same ; for this implies a direct contradiction, and therefore is impossible.

Patrick. I confess there is great difficulty in the subject.

John. I don't think there is any difficulty at all in it ; and if you will, without prejudice, sit down and converse freely about it, I doubt not that in a very short time you will perceive the ceremony, when divested of the mystery with which it has been surrounded in the dark ages of the Church, by an awfully corrupt and venal and superstitious Priesthood, to be at once a most simple and affecting institution of the Saviour. I think, Patrick, you admit that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary ?

Patrick. I do.

John. And do you also believe that the wafer made by the journeyman baker was born of the Virgin Mary?

Patrick. Indeed I cannot believe that.

John. Then, as Jesus Christ *was* born of Mary, and the wafer Jesus Christ *was not* born of Mary, but was made of a little flour and water, the wafer Jesus Christ cannot be the Jesus Christ of the Bible.

Patrick. To be candid, I confess the thing appears impossible. .

John. You believe, Patrick, that Jesus Christ was man as well as God; and that, like yourself, he had a head, and a body, and eyes, and ears, and hands, and feet?

Patrick. Beyond all doubt he had.

John. Has the wafer Jesus Christ, made by your Priest, the appearance of a man? What is his height, what are his features, and what is his general appearance?

Patrick. There is no appearance of a man at all. The wafer Jesus Christ is merely a small round piece of baked flour and water.

John. Then, as the Jesus Christ of the Bible had a perfect body, like our own, and as the wafer Jesus Christ has none, they cannot possibly be the same.

Patrick. Indeed, I do not see how they can.

John. Did you, Patrick, ever receive a wafer Jesus Christ?

Patrick. Yes, I have swallowed scores of them.

John. How did they taste? Did they taste like bread, or flesh?

Patrick. Like flesh! No, indeed, but only like bread.

John. Do you think, Patrick, that Jesus Christ had any bones in his body?

Patrick. To be sure he had, as many bones as we have in ours.

John. Is your throat very elastic, Patrick? Do you think you could swallow a human skull without difficulty, or gulp down the leg-bones of a man without inconvenience?

Patrick. I believe the throat was never yet made which could do all that.

John. Perhaps, Patrick, your masticating powers are of a superior kind, and by the aid of your grinders you can reduce skulls and other bones to a mere pulp, and then swallow them with as much ease as you would a treacle posset?

Patrick. No, your honour, whatever you may think of me, I am no dog, but I hope a good Christian.

John. Then, Patrick, if you can neither chew bones, nor swallow them unchewed, and if the true Jesus Christ had flesh and blood and bones as we have, do you think that which you swallowed without chewing at all was Jesus Christ?

Patrick. The Priest always said it was, but I confess I begin to doubt.

John. You have your choice of two things,—either to disbelieve the Priest, or to disbelieve your senses. If what the Priest says be true, your senses, and your reason too, are liars; and if your senses speak the truth, your Priest is a liar. Suppose your Priest were to tell you that a quartern loaf is a shoulder of mutton, and that a twopenny loaf is a bottle of wine, would you believe him?

Patrick. Indeed I would not, though he both said it and swore it.

John. Why not?

Patrick. Because it would give the lie to my senses; on which if I cannot depend, I cannot depend upon any thing.

John. Just so: and therefore, for the same reason, you cannot believe that the wafer is Jesus Christ; for to believe this, you must give the lie to your senses. You remind me, Patrick, of a passage in your witty countryman, Dean Swift's Tale of a Tub, in which he sets forth, in a strong light, the monstrously impious and absurd doctrine of transubstantiation.

Patrick. If it is not too long, I should like to hear it; for the Dean, I have always understood, was a great man, and the friend of Ireland.

John. He was a man of talent, and a lover of

the Emerald Isle; but, Patrick, he hated the absurdities of Popery. The Dean, in his Tale of a Tub, gives a very humorous and satirical history of the rise of some of the corruptions of Popery, and, among the rest, of transubstantiation. He represents Peter, by whom he means the Pope, inviting his two brothers, Jack and Martin, by whom he means Calvin and Luther, to dine with him on a shoulder of mutton. Having sat down to table, Peter says, “ ‘Come, brothers, fall to, and spare not; here is excellent good mutton; or hold, now my hand is in, I’ll help you.’ At which word, in much ceremony, with fork and knife, he carves out two good slices of a loaf, and presents each on a plate to his brothers. The elder of the two, not suddenly entering into Lord Peter’s conceit, began with very civil language to examine the mystery. ‘My Lord,’ said he, ‘I doubt, with great submission, there may be some mistake.’ ‘What,’ says Peter, ‘you are pleasant; come then, let us hear this jest your head is so big with.’ ‘None in the world, my Lord; but unless I am very much deceived, your Lordship was pleased a while ago to let fall a word about mutton, and I would be glad to see it with all my heart.’ ‘How!’ said Peter, appearing in great surprise, ‘I do not comprehend this at all.’ Upon which, the younger interposing to set the business aright; ‘My Lord,’

said he, 'my brother, I suppose, is hungry, and longs for the mutton your Lordship hath promised us to dinner.' 'Pray,' said Peter, 'take me along with you; either you are both mad, or disposed to be merrier than I approve of: if *you*, there, do not like your piece, I will carve you another, though I should take that to be the choice bit of the whole shoulder.' 'What then, my Lord,' replied the first, 'it seems this is a shoulder of mutton all this while.' 'Pray, Sir,' says Peter, 'eat your victuals and leave off your impertinence, if you please, for I am not disposed to relish it at present.' But the other could not forbear being over-provoked at the affected seriousness of Peter's countenance. 'My Lord,' said he, 'I can only say, that to my eyes, and fingers, and teeth, and nose, it seems to be nothing but a crust of bread.' Upon which the second put in his word: 'I never saw a piece of mutton in my life so nearly resembling a slice from a twelvepenny loaf.' 'Look ye, gentlemen,' cries Peter, in a rage, 'to convince you what a couple of blind, positive, ignorant, wilful puppies you are, I will use but this plain argument: I swear it is true, good, natural mutton, as any in Leadenhall market; and confound you both eternally, if you offer to believe otherwise.' * You per-

* Swift's Works, vol. xii., pp. 74, 75. 12th Edition. 1751.

ceive, Patrick, that both Jack and Martin were very much like you ; and that they would not believe, though Peter swore it, that a loaf of bread was a shoulder of mutton.

Patrick. Well, I do perceive it. But what does the Dean mean by Peter's curse upon them if they refused to believe that bread was mutton ?

John. He meant, that the Pope and Popish Priests pronounce all accursed who will not believe that a bit of bread, over which the Priest has uttered his *hocus pocus*, is not entirely changed into the body and soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. Many have been burned at the stake, Patrick, for not believing this, which no man can believe, without at once renouncing all sense and reason.

Patrick. Well, I confess, it does appear to be directly opposed to both. Indeed, when I have sometimes proposed a few questions to the Priest about it, he has always put me off, by saying, it is not to be reasoned about, but believed.

John. But why did he say it was to be believed ?

Patrick. Because he said it was affirmed by Jesus Christ, and has always been the doctrine of the Church ; and that the thing is altogether miraculous.

John. Did he say where Christ teaches it ?

Patrick. Yes, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chap. xxvi., verses 26—28.

John. I remember the words referred to: they are these,—“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Do you, Patrick, understand these words literally or figuratively?

Patrick. I have been taught to understand the whole literally.

John. Do you think our Lord is a tree, or a door, or a public road?

Patrick. No, indeed, I don't believe he is.

John. But you have as much reason for believing these, as that the bread and the wine which he gave to his disciples were his body and blood; for he as expressly says, “I am the vine,” and, “I am the door,” and, “I am the way,” as he said, “This is my body.” Why then not understand these literally, as well as this? And why not stoutly maintain that every vine and every door you see, and every road on which you travel, is Jesus Christ? You have the same authority for the one as for the other.

Patrick. I have always been taught by the Priest to understand these *figuratively*, but the

body of Christ *literally*; though I confess I could never understand why, for they always appeared to me of the same character.

John. Undoubtedly, neither the one nor the other can be understood literally, without the most manifest absurdity. If you understand the passage literally, then it will follow that the disciples not only eat their Lord, which you know is mere cannibalism, and drank his blood, as Shungee or any New-Zealand Chief drinks the blood of his captives; but also that they actually swallowed the cup, for he took the cup and said, "Drink ye all of this, for this"—this what? this cup; nothing else is mentioned—"is my blood."

Patrick. But the cup cannot be understood literally: it is a figurative expression to denote what was in the cup. It would be absurd to suppose they literally swallowed the cup.

John. Just so. But if this part is to be understood figuratively, why may not the whole be so understood? Is it not infinitely more absurd to suppose they ate and drank our Lord, whom they still saw entire and perfect, both sound and whole before them, than to suppose that they even swallowed a cup?

Patrick. I must say, I think it is.

John. Have you, Patrick, observed the introductory words of the Evangelist,—“As they were eating?”

Patrick. Not particularly. What was it they were eating?

John. They were eating the passover. Do you know any thing about the passover, Patrick?

Patrick. I believe it was an annual feast which the Jews held; but not having, like you, had the privilege of reading the Bible much, I am unacquainted with the particulars, but shall be very glad of information.

John. The passover, Patrick, was an Egyptian male lamb, without blemish, of the first year; or rather a great number of such lambs,—for every head of a family among the Israelites was to have one,—which were all to be killed on the same evening, and their blood sprinkled on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-posts of the houses, and then their flesh was to be roasted and eaten. This, says Moses, is “the Lord’s passover.” Do you think, Patrick, that our Lord and his disciples eat any of those lambs?

Patrick. For sure I don’t. This was impossible; for our Lord did not live till 1550 years after those lambs were eaten.

John. But does not the Evangelist say that our Lord did eat the passover with his disciples? If he did not eat the paschal lamb, what did he eat?

Patrick. I don’t know, unless he eat something in commemoration of that lamb.

John. Your common sense, Patrick, has explained it. It is called eating the passover, in commemoration of the extraordinary preservation of the families of Israel, through the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb, when the destroying angel went through Egypt. Our Lord called it the passover, not because it was literally the passover, but because it was an ordinance appointed by God to remind them of the passover. Neither he nor his disciples, nor any of the Jews, ever imagined that the lambs killed in Jerusalem were the same which their fathers had eaten in Egypt. Such an absurdity never entered into the mind of a Jew. Now, whilst our Lord was celebrating this commemorative rite, to which he gave the name of the thing commemorated, "the passover," he also appointed a rite commemorative of himself, to which he applied the terms, "my body and blood;" because, as in the former case, the lamb was designed to remind the Jews of the passover, so in the latter, the bread and the wine were intended to remind the disciples of Christ to the end of time, that Jesus their Lord and Master was slain for them. Hence, when in the eucharist we apply the terms "body" and "blood" to the bread and wine, we use them not as signifying that they are literally the body and blood of Christ, but only that they are memorials of these, just as the Jewish

feast of the passover was a memorial of the paschal lamb.

Patrick. When your honour talked of divesting this subject of all mystery, I confess I thought you had undertaken a work which you would not be able to accomplish. But I now perceive there is no mystery at all in it, but that it is simply a commemorative institution.

John. Exactly so. The thing itself is perfectly simple, whilst it reminds us of the greatest of all mysteries,—the mystery of godliness,—the sacrificial death of the Son of God, for the sins of the whole world. Considered in this view, it is at once simple, and affecting, and edifying. Our Lord was about to leave his disciples; but before he leaves them, he establishes among them an ordinance by which at particular seasons he might be particularly remembered by them,—a kind of *keepsake*, which, whenever observed, would remind them of his character, his humility, his meekness, his patience, his devotion, his zeal, his purity, and, above all, of his love, which was stronger than death,—which led him to bear their sins in his own body upon the tree. The eucharist thus celebrated will never fail to deepen our humility, to strengthen our faith, and to inflame our love to him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. This ordinance, too, so long as it is scripturally cele-

brated, will perpetuate in the church the grand Christian doctrine of the atonement ; a doctrine which, as the sun in the Christian firmament, sheds its light upon every other part of the Christian system.

Patrick. I am now perfectly satisfied that Jesus Christ called the bread and wine his body just in the same sense in which he called the lamb, on which he and his disciples feasted, the passover. But did not the Apostles, when they afterwards celebrated this feast, teach the people that the bread, by consecration, was converted into the real body, and the wine into the real blood, of Christ ?

John. By consecration, Patrick ? The Apostles knew nothing of consecration.

Patrick. What ! Did not both our Lord and his Apostles consecrate the sacramental bread ? What else can be understood by the words, “ Jesus took bread, and blessed it ? ”

John. The word *it* is not in the original. *It* is the word of the translators and not of the Evangelist ; and hence, like all such words, it is printed in Italics.

Patrick. But what else could he bless ?

John. He could bless God. And that he did so, we learn from St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. “ I have received of the Lord—that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread : and when

he had"—What? Blessed the bread? No, but blessed God: "when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat," &c. And instead of teaching that the bread was changed into the body of Christ, St. Paul says that Christ had told him that after he had given the bread and the cup to his disciples at the last supper, he added, "As often as ye eat"—what? This flesh, and drink this blood? No; but "as often as ye eat this *bread*, and drink this *cup*, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The Apostle knew nothing of transubstantiation. The bread, even after the Lord had given it, remained only bread.

Patrick. Well, I used to wonder how the disciples could believe that they were eating Christ, when all the while they saw him; or that they had eaten him, when he yet continued with them. But the Priest told me it was wicked not to believe; and unless I did believe it, I must be damned; and therefore I endeavoured to believe as he told me.

John. That is, Patrick, you *said* you believed it. But no one, except he be Priest-ridden to madness, could any more believe *that*, than he could believe the traveller's tale of the Irish cat-fight. Hearing some brother travellers romancing at a wonderful rate, and resolved to outdo them all, he said, "What you have related is nothing to what I have seen. In

Ireland, *cat-fights* are very common. I once attended one. The combatants were two fine tom cats. They fought most furiously for some time; and at length they began to eat each other: first they eat each other's head, and then the body, and then they continued eating each other till only a little bit of each of their tails was left." I question, Patrick, whether even your Priest could at present believe this; but had the Council of Trent decreed it to be an article of faith, and threatened the unbeliever with damnation, he would have believed this as firmly as he believes in transubstantiation.

Patrick. Though when we first began this conversation, I did believe in transubstantiation, I now no more believe it than I do the story of the cats; the latter not being more absurd, and ridiculous than the former.

John. I rejoice, Patrick, at your deliverance from this preposterously absurd and dangerous doctrine,—a doctrine which annihilates one of the most popular and powerful evidences of the truth of Christianity, and which leads to the grossest idolatry.

Patrick. To which of the evidences of the truth of Christianity do you refer?

John. To the evidence of miracles.

Patrick. How does transubstantiation affect this kind of evidence?

John. The truth or reality of a miracle can

only be decided by the senses ; but if our senses are not to be depended upon, and we are to believe in direct contradiction to these, (as in the case of transubstantiation, in which, though to the sight, and smell, and taste, there is nothing but bread, yet we are to believe that, in spite of what the senses say, there is not a particle of bread in it, but that it is really the body and soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ,)—if, I say, the senses cannot be depended upon in this case, neither can they be relied upon in any other. Then all the miracles by which the divine character and mission of our Lord have been established, are absolutely worth nothing ; for we cannot possibly be assured that he ever performed a single miracle, either before his crucifixion, or after his resurrection. Look, for instance, at a few of those miracles. He changed water into wine. But how did they know it to be wine ?

Patrick. By its *taste*,—it tasted like wine ; by its *smell*,—it smelt like wine ; and by its *colour*,—its appearance was that of wine.

John. True, Patrick ; but then you know the consecrated bread tastes like bread, smells like bread, and looks like bread ; but all the while, if the foolish doctrine of transubstantiation were true, it is not bread, but flesh. It was quite impossible, therefore, if the senses are not to be depended upon, that the disciples, or the mo-

ther of Christ, or any who were at the feast, could ascertain what it was: it might, for any thing they could know to the contrary, be whisky instead of wine. Take another miracle. You remember our Lord once fed five thousand men, beside women and children, with only five loaves and two fishes, and that after they had all eaten, and were filled, twelve baskets full of the fragments remained. What evidence is there, Patrick, that he did any such thing?

Patrick. Why sure there can be no deficiency of evidence here; for there were above five thousand witnesses.

John. Witnesses! witnesses of what?

Patrick. Witnesses of the reality of the miracle. They *saw* that there were no more than five loaves and two fishes; they saw that there was an immense multitude fed by these; every man *tasted* the bread and the fish, and he knew them to be such; and every man *felt* his hunger perfectly allayed; and every man also *saw* the immense quantity of fragments which were left.

John. Then, Patrick, do you mean to say, that the only evidence these five thousand men had that they were thus fed, was the evidence of their senses,—they *saw*, *tasted*, and *felt*, and therefore believed?

Patrick. Undoubtedly, they could have no other.

John. But, if transubstantiation be true, that evidence is good for nothing ; for, according to that doctrine, we are neither to believe our eyes, nor our nose, nor our hands, nor our taste, but to give the whole the lie. Now, if the senses deceive us in one case, they may in a thousand. A liar, you know, Patrick, is never to be believed. If transubstantiation be true, no man living can prove either that our Lord healed diseases, or cast out devils, or raised the dead, or was crucified, or buried, or rose again from the dead, or ascended on high ; for every one of these depends upon the evidence of the senses, which transubstantiation absolutely annihilates. Thus, Patrick, you see the doctrine is not only ridiculous, but is pregnant with scepticism and rank infidelity. Superstition and infidelity are nearly allied. The one naturally leads to the other ; and hence, Papal France begat a nation of atheists.

Patrick. You now have not only convinced me that the doctrine is ridiculously absurd, but that it is mischievous. But you said also it leads to idolatry. I should like to see how you make this out.

John. I wish this were difficult to do ; for I assure you, Patrick, I have no wish to make Popery appear worse than it is : I would even give the devil his due. Do not both the Priest and the people worship the consecrated bread ?

Patrick. Yes, indeed they do ; and that with uncommon reverence, some kneeling, and others falling prostrate when it is elevated by the Priest.

John. I know they do ; for I have seen it myself. On Monday, May 5, 1828, I attended mass at the Popish chapel at Waterford. On that occasion three Priests officiated at what, I suppose, they call the high altar. They were three of the most supple-jointed fellows I ever saw, with the exception of rope-dancers and mountebanks. The various evolutions performed by them during the service I will not attempt to describe. They bowed, and bowed, and bowed, to the pictures or images before them, sometimes on one side of the altar, and sometimes on the other, sometimes on a higher, and sometimes on a lower, step. Desirous of seeing all that was to be seen, I got as near to the Priests as I decently could ; and when the officiating Priest was in the most solemn part of his mummery, transubstantiating the wafer,—the people, some on their knees, with their hands clasped, and their eyes lifted up to the ceiling, and others bending forward, almost in a state of prostration, exhibited appearances of the profoundest reverence and the deepest devotion. They beheld their wafer God, and they worshipped and adored. And yet, Patrick, I witnessed a circumstance at that time, which

led me to think their reverence and devotion were in appearance only. It was this: Whilst they were in the very depth of their devotion, and worshipping their newly-created God, a beggar-boy came to ask alms of me and my friend. Being with great seriousness repulsed for interrupting us in the midst of such solemnities, he immediately addressed himself to a Papist who was on his knees, with hands and eyes uplifted, who, on being thus interrupted, instantly collared the poor ragged mendicant with one hand, whilst with the other he gave him a box on the head, and sent him reeling; then in an instant his hands and eyes resumed their devout appearance.

Patrick. O, that is nothing to what I have seen! Many of those whom you suppose to be so devout, will, as soon as they retire from mass, curse and swear like troopers, and drink whisky till they reel.

John. This, Patrick, is truly lamentable; but it does not surprise me, for idolatry, whether Pagan or Popish, will naturally produce works of darkness.

Patrick. I believe it, and therefore when St. Paul was sent to idolaters, it was to turn them from *darkness* to light. But, supposing the bread to be really converted into the body of Christ, would it then be idolatry to worship it?

John. You have supposed, Patrick, what I have already proved to be impossible. But, for the sake of argument, we will suppose the thing to be possible, and that the wafer can be converted into the body, and soul, and divinity, of our Lord ; even then I maintain that no one could be certain that he was not an idolater when worshipping the host, because no one could be certain that the bread was transubstantiated. In order to this, many things are necessary, according to a Roman Missal, published in Dublin, in 1804. The following defects completely vitiate the whole, and prevent the conversion of the bread into the body of Christ :—

“ 1. If the bread be not of wheat ; or if of wheat, it be mixed with such quantity of other grain, that it doth not remain wheaten bread ; or if it be in any way corrupted, it doth not make a sacrament.

“ 2. If the bread be made with rose-water, or other distilled water, it is doubtful if it make a sacrament.

“ 3. If the bread begin to corrupt, but be not corrupted, likewise if it be not unleavened according to the custom of the Latin Church, it makes a sacrament ; but the Priest who consecrates sins grievously.

“ 4. If the wine be quite sour, or putrid, or be made of unripe grapes ; or if so much water

be mixed with it, it spoils the wine ; no sacrament is made.

“ 5. If, after the consecration of the body, or even of the wine, the defect of either kind be discovered, one being consecrated ; then, if the matter which should be placed cannot be had, he must, to avoid scandal, proceed.

“ 6. If any one shall leave out, or change, any part of the form of the consecration of the body and blood, and in the change of the words, such words do not signify the same thing, there is no consecration.

“ 7. If any one intend not to consecrate, but to cheat or banter ; also if any wafers remain forgotten on the altar ; or if any part of the wine, or any wafer, be hidden, when he did not intend consecrating but what he saw ; also if he shall have before him eleven wafers, and intend to consecrate but ten only, not determining what ten he meant ;—in all these cases the consecration fails, because intention is required.”

The following directions are also given in the same work :—

“ Should the consecrated wafer or host disappear, either by some accident, or by wind, or miracle, or be swallowed by some animal, and so cannot be found, then let another be consecrated.

“ If after consecration, a gnat, or spider, or any such thing, fall into the chalice, if the Priest

dislike to swallow it, let him take it out, and wash it with wine, and when mass is ended, burn it, and cast it and the washing into holy ground; but if he can, and fears no danger, let him swallow it with the blood.

“ If poison fall into the chalice, or what might cause vomiting, let the consecrated wine be put into another cup, and other wine with water be again placed to be consecrated; and when mass is finished, the blood must be poured on linen cloth, or tow, and remain till it be dry, and then the ashes be thrown into holy ground.

“ If the host be poisoned, let another be consecrated and used, and that be kept in a tabernacle, &c., until it be corrupted, and after that be thrown into holy ground.

“ If in winter the blood be frozen in the cup, put warm cloths about the cup; if that will not do, let it be put into boiling water near the altar till it be melted, taking care it does not get into the cup.

“ If any of Christ's blood fall to the ground by negligence, it must be licked up with the tongue, the place be sufficiently scraped, the scrapings burned, but the ashes must be buried in holy ground.

“ If the Priest vomit the eucharist, and the species appear entire, it must be licked up reverently; if a nausea prevent this, then let the consecrated species be cautiously separated, and

put by in some holy place, till they be corrupted, and after be cast into holy ground ; but if the species appear not, the vomit must be burned, and the ashes thrown into holy ground."

Such is the vile trash published for the direction of the Popish Clergy. Is there a man among them, except he be an idiot, who can swallow down this filth and folly ? Yet, what is this, compared to the moral filth with which they are familiar in their private confessions ? The soul of a Popish Confessor is a common sink, into which run all the vile impurities and secret abominations of his deluded devotees.

Now, Patrick, should the bread not be entirely wheaten, or be made with distilled water ; or should the wine be made of unripe grapes ; or should the Priest omit or alter a word ; or should he, either because he knows the whole to be a mere farce, or, if he be a believer in transubstantiation, because he is determined to deprive his parishioners of the benefit of the mass, not intend to consecrate ; or should he forget which wafers he has, or has not, consecrated ;—in any and in all of these and other cases, there is no consecration. Consequently, the worship of the host in all these cases is the grossest idolatry ; it is worshipping a bit of bread. How much is this like the idolaters in Isaiah's day,—“ He baketh bread ; yea, he

maketh a god, and worshippeth it!"*—of whom he adds, "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

Patrick. I wonder how a doctrine so absurd and impious, as I now perceive it is, ever found its way into the Christian church.

John. I believe I can tell you the date both of its birth and of its baptism.

Patrick. Then you will greatly oblige me, if you will.

John. After Constantine had heaped riches upon the church, its ministry became awfully corrupt and deteriorated. Instead of entering upon that ministry animated by zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of the world, many embraced it as the way to ease, and opulence, and honour. Instead of teaching the doctrines of Christ, as taught by him and his Apostles, they mixed with these the opinions of pagan philosophers, by which its simplicity was destroyed, its moral vigour weakened, and its beauty tarnished. Instead of enforcing its precepts, they associated these with numerous traditions, many of which were as much at variance with the precepts of Christ as were the traditions of the Jews with the commandments

* Isaiah xliv. 15.

of God. And instead of exhibiting the example of Christ for their constant imitation, they applauded the conduct of fanatics, who shut themselves up in monasteries, or who retired from the abodes of men to dwell in deserts, where they voluntarily subjected themselves to the most severe bodily austerities and privations. Then the religion of Jesus—simple, spiritual, and pure—was exhibited in most unseemly union with the antiquated institutions of Moses, and the vain and empty speculations of pagan philosophers, and the ridiculous fancies of some popular enthusiasts. Then the rulers of the church sought for priestly power, whilst they were negligent of the souls of the people; and, instead of provoking each other to zealous exertion in extending the empire of the Redeemer, and in well-shepherding the flocks committed to their care, were engaged in angry contentions about who should be the greatest, and whether Easter should be kept a few weeks earlier or later, with a multitude of other matters, of no greater importance. From that period the religion of Jesus Christ began to be more and more corrupted. There was a rage for accommodating Christianity to the heathenish taste of the people, who, when imperial influence was in favour of Christianity, had embraced it, without any conviction of its truth, or experience of its saving power. Among other things,

images of saints were placed in many churches, which soon became objects of worship. All, however, had not so completely lost the knowledge of Christianity, as either to embrace or sanction this species of idolatry. Some eminent men, both Clergy and laity, opposed it; and in some places the images were pulled down, and broken in pieces. The contest was long and angry. At length a Council was called to decide the question whether images should or should not be worshipped. That Council was held at Constantinople, in 754, when there were present three hundred and thirty-eight Bishops; in which not only the worship, but also the use, of images was condemned. "The doctrine of the corporeal presence of Christ was first started upon occasion of the dispute about the worship of images, in opposition whereto this Synod did argue thus: 'That our Lord having left us no other image of himself but the sacrament, in which the substance of bread is the image of his body, we ought to make no other image of our Lord.' In answer to this argument, the second Council of Nice, in the year 787, did declare, 'That the sacrament after consecration *is not the image and anti-type* of Christ's body and blood, but is *properly* his body and blood.'"^{*} Here, then, was the

^{*} Tillotson's Works, folio edit., vol i., p. 197.

birth of transubstantiation into the Christian church, and its parents were image-worshippers.

But, Patrick, it was long before the poor brat could be admitted to baptism. Many men of name and talents refused to acknowledge him. It was not till many years after the Greek Church had cradled the little urchin, that the Latin or Romish Church acknowledged its legitimacy. In the year 818, Paschasius Radbertus first broached it in that Church. But it was warmly and ably opposed by some of the best and ablest Divines of that age, among whom was Rubanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mentz. Referring, in the year 847, to Paschasius, he remarks, "Some of late, not having a right opinion concerning the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, have said that this is the body and blood of our Lord which was born of the Virgin Mary, and in which our Lord suffered upon the cross, and rose from the dead: which error we have opposed with all our might." "From whence," as Archbishop Tillotson remarks, "it is plain, by the testimony of one of the greatest and most learned Bishops in that age, and of eminent reputation for piety, that what is now the very doctrine of the Church of Rome concerning the sacrament, was then esteemed an error broached by some particular persons, but was far from being the generally received doctrine of that age." But

the darkness became more dense ; and this, and image-worship, and relics, and purgatory, and indulgences, and every other abomination for which the Papal Church is distinguished, grew up in the darkness ; till at length this misshapen monster, having been previously licked into its present form by Pope Gregory VII., in 1079, was publicly baptized by the name of Transubstantiation, in the year 1215, by Pope Innocent III., at the Lateran Council, a name unknown to men before that time.

Patrick. Then this same transubstantiation is the offspring of image-worshipping idolaters, and was born in the year 787, and was baptized by a Pope in the year 1215. But when speaking of its birth, you said it was born into the *Christian* Church in that year. Did you mean to intimate that it had existed elsewhere ?

John. I did not, Patrick. The animal could not breathe any where, nor live a single day, but in the fetid atmosphere of the stagnant marshes of corrupted Christianity. Heathen nations were indeed very stupid, and deeply sunk in idolatry, and, like Papists, made their gods and worshipped them ; yet I believe we have no evidence that any of the god-makers, whether bread-god makers, or wooden-god makers, or stone-god makers, or silver or gold god makers, were ever so stupid as to imagine that the gold ceased to be gold, and the silver ceased to be

silver, and the stone ceased to be stone, &c., and that these were actually changed into the very nature of the gods they were intended to represent. This is a climax of absurdity to which the most sublime in heathen superstition could never reach ;—an elevation adapted only to the lofty flights of your Gregories, and your Leos, and their vassals, the docile and implicit believers in their infallibility. It is indeed true that the Heathen offered bread in sacrifice to their gods ; which bread was thin and round, like the Romish host. Hence Wm. du Choul, one of the French King's council, wrote a treatise of the religion of the ancient Romans, printed at Lyons, in the year 1556, wherein, among other points of conformity between ancient and modern (that is, between Pagan and Papal) Rome, he observes that the old Romans eat standing in their temples, (as the Popish Priests do still,) and made use of little round breads or cakes, like those that are used at the Lord's supper, on Holy Thursday, in the great church at Lyons." *

Patrick. I most sincerely thank you for the information you have given, and for the patience and forbearance you exercised towards me when

* See a work, entitled "The Popish Mass," by Andrew Meaghar, formerly a Popish Priest, but now a Protestant Minister in Ireland : a work which connects Popery in its most prominent features with Paganism.

my zeal for transubstantiation had nearly got the better of my prudence. I hope you will pardon it ; for though at one time I could freely have consigned you to the flames, yet now I feel nothing but gratitude both to God and you. I had a zeal, but it was without knowledge. Our conversation has been long ; but I have derived instruction from it, which I hope never to forget. You have fully convinced me that transubstantiation is a fable ; that it was never taught by either Jesus Christ or his Apostles ; that it originated with idolaters bearing the Christian name ; that it is a doctrine which exceeds in absurdity any thing ever known in any of the most superstitious heathen nations of the world, whether ancient or modern ; and that the worship of the consecrated wafer is rank idolatry, and a mere imitation of heathen sacrifices of bread.

John. I rejoice, Patrick, at being made the instrument of delivering you from so great an evil. Popery is an awful corruption of Christianity, and the great enemy of God. It substitutes the most senseless, and childish, and ridiculous, and heathenish forms and ceremonies in place of the simple and spiritual worship of Jehovah. Avoid *her* worship, Patrick, as you would that of a heathen temple. Come out of her,—be not a partaker of any of her abominations, lest ye also be a partaker of her

plagues. The Lord give you understanding in all things. Farewell.

Patrick. Farewell ; and may the blessing of him who was ready to perish come upon you !

DIALOGUE III.

ON ANGEL, SAINT, AND IMAGE WORSHIP.

Luke and Demetrius.

Luke. Good morning, Demetrius. You seem pensive and dejected: were it not from a fear of being too obtrusive, I should like to know what is the cause,—whether it is bodily or mental, personal or domestic, civil or religious? I should like to know, not to satisfy an idle curiosity, but that I might at least sympathize with you, and, if possible, assist you.

Demetrius. I thank you for your kindness, Sir. I acknowledge that I have for some time been much depressed, as well I may; for my trade has been on the decline for several years, and is becoming worse and worse every day.

Luke. What trade do you follow, Demetrius?

Demetrius. I am a maker of images.

Luke. Such images as travelling Italians sell ?

Demetrius. Not exactly so. They make theirs of plaster, or chalk, or some such things ; whereas mine are made, some of wood, some of ivory or bone, some of brass, and a few of silver. Besides, their images are merely for ornament, but mine are for use,—a sacred use : theirs are to adorn a chimney-piece, but mine are for the closet or the chapel, before which the *faithful* kneel and worship. In addition to which I might add, their images are the images, chiefly, of Kings, and poets, and philosophers, and heroes, and statesmen ; whereas those which I make are the images of saints, and angels, and Jesus, and the blessed Virgin.

Luke. And does your trade really decline ?

Demetrius. So much so that I have had serious thoughts of giving it up, and turning my attention to something else.

Luke. Can you conjecture to what cause its decline is traceable ?

Demetrius. The cause is obvious. Formerly the faithful were generally uneducated ; but now they, at least many of them, are taught to read : formerly they were ignorant of the Bible ; but now, through the infernal zeal of Bible-Society men, many of them are the daily readers of that most dangerous book : and formerly they went to mass only ; but now, in spite of all the

Priests can say, they will sometimes listen to the babbling of any heretic.

Luke. Then you think education, and the Bible, as well as heretical Preachers, unfriendly to image worship.

Demetrius. Undoubtedly ! For "ignorance is the mother of devotion." When men read and think for themselves, they become nice and critical, and wish to know the reason for every thing ; and if you cannot satisfy them, they turn heretics.

Luke. Then you always have most trade among the ignorant.

Demetrius. Indeed my trade lies almost exclusively among them.

Luke. You remind me of an observation made by Porphyry many hundred years ago : "Images are the books of idiots." Your experience, Demetrius, is confirmatory of its truth.

Demetrius. If by idiots he meant the ignorant and uneducated, I agree with him ; for these venerate my images ; but when I ask Bible readers to buy a Mother of God, or a Jesus Christ, or a St. Patrick, or a St. Dominick, or any other saint, they smile sarcastically, and ask such impious and heretical questions, and make such profane remarks, as, were they in Spain, would procure them a hot birth in that house of mercy, the Holy Inquisition. But here

we have no Inquisition to punish heresy, and therefore heresy prevails.

Luke. What questions do they ask, and what remarks do they make, Demetrius?

Demetrius. The other day a pert Bible-reading fellow took the image of St Dominick into his hand, and, after feeling his head all over, said, "Demetrius, it is just what I expected, —the saint was both a fool and a knave; for the organs of idiocy and hypocrisy are uncommonly protuberant." Another, taking up the blessed Virgin, said, "Demetrius, is this a good likeness? I suspect you are practising upon our simplicity; for this has more the appearance of an opera girl than of the blessed Virgin;" — when another, snatching it from me, said, "Demetrius, who do you say this is?" "The Mother of God," I replied; when with a profane archness of look and manner, which I shall never forget, he said, "Can you tell me, Demetrius, whether God or his mother is the oldest?"

Luke. How did you answer this question?

Demetrius. Answer it! why, I fell into a great passion with the profane heretic, and told him he deserved to be cursed, "bell, book, and candle," and to be damned everlastingly.

Luke. Was he satisfied with this answer?

Demetrius. Not he: the wretch looked at me with great composure, and, in a manner the

most provokingly calm, said, "Demetrius, will you now,—for I am a sincere inquirer after truth,—will you now have the kindness to say, whether God or his mother is the oldest? To assist you in answering this difficult question, suffer me to ask a previous one: Are you, Demetrius, or your mother, the oldest?"

Luke. Well, and what did you reply to this?

Demetrius. My mother, who was standing by, burst into a fit of laughter, and said, "What a foolish question! Why, to be sure, I am the oldest. This I am ready to swear any day, by the blessed Virgin, and all the saints and angels in heaven."

Luke. What did the heretic say to this?

Demetrius. He smiled, and said, "I perceive you are a sensible woman, and that it is your opinion that no son can be older than his mother." To which she fully assented; when turning to me, he said, "Demetrius, how old is God?" I was shocked at the question; but I found it would not do for me to fly into a passion again, and therefore, with as much mildness of manner as I could muster, I said, "God, Sir, is eternal: He had no beginning." "How old, then," said he, "is his mother? Your mother, Demetrius, says, that the mother is always older than her son; and you have too much filial piety to give her the lie. Now God, you say, is from eternity, and as the

Virgin Mary is his mother, and as the mother is older, at least by a few years, than her son, do you mean to say that she is a little older than eternity?"

Luke. Did not this question puzzle you?

Demetrius. I confess it did.

Luke. How did you answer it?

Demetrius. For the life of me, I did not know how to answer it; and I flew again into a violent rage, and called him every thing but a gentleman. And what increased my vexation was, the impudent heretic had such absolute command over himself, that when I was boiling with rage, and pouring upon him a volley of scolding words, he smiled

“ Like patience on her monument; ”

and as soon as I had become a little calm, through mere exhaustion, he said, “ Demetrius, I don’t wish to give you offence; but if I am in error, I should like to be set right; and if you are in error, it will do you no harm to have it corrected. Do you think, Demetrius, the blessed Virgin was as old as Adam?” To which I replied, surlily, “ No! I don’t believe she was.” “ Do you think she was as old as Noah?” To which I answered, “ No.” “ Do you think she was as old as her mother?” “ To be sure not,” I answered. “ Do you think God

is as old as Adam?" "Undoubtedly," I answered, "for he made Adam." "Then," he added, "if Adam be older than the blessed Virgin, and God be older than Adam, how can she be the mother of God?"

Luke. He pressed you hard, Demetrius: how did you answer this?

Demetrius. I said, "It is a mystery." To which he replied, "No, it is an absurdity. She was mother to the *human*, but not to the *divine*, nature of Jesus Christ. She was older than the former; but she was, as we all are, the offspring of the latter. It is a title which Papists give to the blessed Virgin, to promote and bolster up a system of superstition; but one which neither Jesus Christ nor his Apostles ever gave."

Luke. Did the heretic convince you, Demetrius?

Demetrius. He silenced me; and but for the interest I have in making her images,—for I sell more of these than I do of any other, because the faithful think she is God's mother,—but for this, I really think he would have made me a convert to his opinion, it appeared so perfectly reasonable. I think I may say, I *was* convinced, but I *would not be* convinced.

Luke. Yes, Demetrius, I understand you:

"He that's convinced against his will
Will hold the same opinion still."

Interest often blinds the understanding ; and when it cannot do this, as sometimes it cannot, it will hinder the man from acting according to its dictates. But, Demetrius, in what way do the faithful use your images ?

Demetrius. They kneel and pray before them.

Luke. Do they think the images hear them ?

Demetrius. Some, I suppose, do ; but the more enlightened believe that whilst they pray to the image, the saint who is represented by it hears them.

Luke. Does the saint dwell in the image, Demetrius ?

Demetrius. Of course he, or, if the saint be a female, she, either dwells in the image, or at no great distance from it, or the worshipper could not be heard.

Luke. Then I hope I shall never be canonized, Demetrius ; for I should not like to dwell where some of your images are placed, nor to be saluted by any filthy prostitute that might choose me for her patron. How many images of the same sort have you made during the period you have been in business ? I mean, for instance, how many Virgin Marys have you made ?

Demetrius. It is impossible for me to say ; but I suppose about ten thousand.

Luke. How many do you suppose there are in the whole world this day ?

Demetrius. That is a question which it is impossible for me to answer ; but I imagine there cannot be fewer than a million ; for wherever the faithful are found, whether in the frigid, or the torrid, or the temperate zones, there the images of the blessed Virgin abound.

Luke. A goodly number, Demetrius ; almost as many as the gods of the Hindoos. Do the faithful kneel and pray before all these ?

Demetrius. Certainly ; for they are bought for that very purpose.

Luke. How many *real* Virgin Marys are there ?

Demetrius. I am surprised at your question : only one ; she who was the mother of our Lord.

Luke. Can she be in more places than one at the same time ?

Demetrius. Why not ?

Luke. Nay, I wish you to answer the question, Demetrius. Perhaps you are like your countryman who said, " For sure I cannot be in two places at the same time, unless I were a bird."

Demetrius. If my countryman ever said so, he said wrong ; for certainly no creature can be in more places than one at the same time. If it is here, it is not there ; and if there, it is not here.

Luke. Then the Virgin Mary, being a crea-

ture, can only be in one place at the same time ; but if so, as her image is in ten hundred thousand places, she must necessarily be always absent from nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine of these ; and therefore all the prayers and salutations offered before these are thrown away, for she is not present either to see or to hear them.

Demetrius. But though spirits cannot be in more places than one at the same time, yet who knows but they can see every thing that takes place in every part of our world at one glance, and hear every word that is uttered ?

Luke. But, Demetrius, *who* knows that they can ? You should have some other foundation on which to build the worship of an image than a. “ *Who knows* but the saint may see and hear me ? ” To suppose that any created being possesses the powers you have mentioned, is to confound the creature with the Creator, and to ascribe to the former the attribute of omniscience ; for, if at one glance it can see and know all that occurs in every part of this terraqueous globe, the probability is, that its knowledge would extend to every thing in the universe. We are to reason, Demetrius, from what we know, and not from what we do *not* know. And if so, there are more than nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand chances against the Virgin Mary hearing any one of her worshippers. This, Demetrius, is

the worst lottery a man ever put into,—such an immense multitude of blanks to one prize ; and that prize itself more than doubtful : for I defy all the Popish Priests in the world to prove that she ever heard a soul of them.

Demetrius. Are you then an enemy to image worship ?

Luke. A decided one, Demetrius ; and if you will engage not to “ bell, book, and candle ” me, I shall tell you why I am an enemy.

Demetrius. I will endeavour to keep my temper ; though, I confess, I find it difficult to do so, when both my religion and my trade are assailed.

Luke. I wish, Demetrius, to convince, but not to offend. I am an enemy to image worship, first, because of its *folly*. You, Demetrius, are at once an image maker and worshipper. You carve a piece of wood into the form of a saint ; and, having done this, you fall down before it, and worship it ; you pray, you weep, you vow, you present it with gifts, you burn a taper before it, and earnestly entreat its aid. Now, Demetrius, only divest yourself, if you can, of your prejudice, and I put it to your own unsophisticated common sense, whether it is possible for any thing to be more foolish and ridiculous, than for a rational creature to pray to a piece of wood which has been carved into the supposed likeness of some saint. What would

you think of a man, were you to find him on his knees before an image of the Duke of Wellington, or Sir Robert Peel, or any of His Majesty's Ministers, entreating them to grant some favour, or to intercede with His Majesty on his behalf?

Demetrius. I should think the fellow a fool.

Luke. But suppose he had been told that every time he spoke to the image of the Duke, the Duke, though hundreds of miles from him, distinctly heard him, and paid as much attention to him as if he were closeted alone with his Grace?

Demetrius. Why, then I should think him a double-distilled fool, for giving credit to such a transparent lie.

Luke. What then are your image worshippers, Demetrius? They pray to a piece of carved wood to help them; and they do so because their Priests tell them that the saint represented by the image hears them. And what are your Priests who teach this transparent lie?

Demetrius. I have been accustomed to revere the "Sacred Order," as they call themselves; but I must confess the doctrine they teach about worshipping images is so contemptibly foolish, that I begin to suspect they are neither wiser nor better than they should be. But have you any other reason for being an enemy to image worship?

Luke. I have, Demetrius: I hate it, secondly,

because it is pure *Heathenism*. The Heathen had their temple and household images in great plenty ; whom they worshipped as the Papists worship the images of their saints. The Prophet Isaiah gives an account of the heathen image makers and worshippers in his day, which in almost every word is correctly descriptive of image makers and worshippers in the Papal Church at this day. “ He ” (the image maker) “ planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn : for he will take thereof, and warm himself ; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread ; yea, he maketh a god,” (or a saint,) “ and worshippeth it ; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire ; with part thereof he eateth flesh ; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied : yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire : and the residue thereof he maketh a god,” (or a saint,) “ even his graven image : he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me ; for thou art my god ; ” (Isai. xliv. 14—17 ;) or, as Papists say to a piece of wood, the image of the cross, “ thou art my only hope.”

Demetrius. I confess the resemblance to be so perfect, that he could not have drawn a more correct likeness of Papal image worship, if I and my neighbours had sat for it. But you

must not forget that though we worship *before* the image, we do not worship the *image*, but the person or thing represented by the image.

Luke. And this, too, is the ancient subterfuge of Heathenism : hence Celsus, a Pagan, and an advocate of Paganism against Christianity, says, in answer to the charges which Christians had brought against image worship, " Who believes that our idols are so many gods? They are only so many symbols of the Divinity ; and we do not adore them but in honour of God." Gother, in his " Papists misrepresented and represented," expresses the same sentiment. The Papist, he says, does not " venerate any image or picture, for any virtue or divinity believed to be in them, or for any thing that is to be petitioned of them ; but because the honour that is exhibited to them is referred to those whom they represent. So that it is not properly the images he honours, but Christ and his saints by the images."* Thus, you see, Celsus, the Pagan, and Gother, the Priest, offer precisely the same apology for image worship.

Demetrius. Two things you have fully convinced me of : first, that Pagans and Papists both worship graven images ; and, secondly, that when charged with it, they are both ashamed of it, and therefore say they worship the god or the

* Papist Misrepresented, p. 2.

saint represented by the image. But surely, too, the god or the saint must in some miraculous way be connected with the image, or images never could have performed such wonders as are recorded of them.

Luke. Did you ever know any wonders performed by images, Demetrius?

Demetrius. No, I never did; but I have heard and read of many. The following are a few:—John Damascen, one of the faithful in the eighth century, says, that having lost his arm, he prayed to the image of the Virgin Mary to have it restored; which was done on the very day it had been cut off.—Cæsarius, who was Bishop of Arles in the beginning of the sixth century, tells us a story of a man who, having made a compact with the devil, prayed to the image of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus in her arms, to forgive him his crime; the Virgin forgave him; but the child looked sour at him, and turned off; when the Virgin said, “O my dear child, forgive that poor man;” but the child refused it. Then she placed him upon the altar, and prostrating herself at his feet, said, “My dear child, forgive that man for my sake;” when the child took up his mother, and said, “I forgive him.”—A woman of Cesaria, in Palestine, was struck with convulsions for laughing at the image of St. Anastasius; but as soon as she begged pardon

of the image, she was cured.—A Jew once struck a crucifix with a knife, and immediately there gushed out a prodigious quantity of blood and water, which being gathered up served to cure all kinds of diseases. Now are not these wonderful things?

Luke. They are indeed very wonderful, Demetrius!

Demetrius. Yes, and I could relate many more not less wonderful; such as images shedding tears, sweating blood, and distilling oil; of an image being brought from heaven into a cave, which was discovered to be there through a number of angels who surrounded it, singing the praises of the Virgin.

Luke. All very wonderful indeed, Demetrius! But, after all, should the Papists apply to Parliament for a patent for image wonders, they will not be able to procure it; for the discovery was made long before they were born, and they have no right to the exclusive benefit of the inventions of others. I don't deny, Demetrius, that they have greatly improved the thing; but then the principle was discovered, and the system had been worked many ages before they ever saw the sun. The Heathens tell us, that the image of Minerva was brought from heaven; Virgil tells us that this image was seen to sweat: and others say the same of the statues of Apollo, Victory, and Mars. It is also said,

that when the Romans asked the statue of Juno at Veii, whether it would consent to be translated to Rome, it bowed the head, and said it was well pleased. You see, Demetrius, the Heathens have the prior claim to the honour of the image wonders.

Demetrius. I perceive they have. But do you believe that what the Heathens have said about their images is true?

Luke. Yes, as firmly as I believe that the image of Diana fell down from Jupiter; (Acts xix. 35;) and that Popish images have done all that is recorded of them. I believe them, Demetrius, to be all alike fabulous, and a wicked imposition on an ignorant people. But it is rather dangerous, now a days, to attempt to make images either work miracles or reveal secrets. A short time ago a Priest in Portugal, the public prints state, pretended that the image of a saint had been discovered by a special revelation. This was brought in solemn pomp to the Catholic chapel, where the Priest said it would discover the right heir to the disputed throne. On a day appointed for consulting this oracle, a vast multitude of people attended, when the Priest began with great solemnity to interrogate it. "Is Don Miguel," said the Priest, "heir to the throne?" The image shook its head, signifying, as was understood, "No." "Is Don Pedro heir to the

throne of Portugal?" The image bowed, signifying its assent.

Demetrius. Bless me! was not this very wonderful?

Luke. Very wonderful, indeed, Demetrius; and had the Priest ended his inquiries here, it would have been recorded among image-working wonders, for the edification of the faithful in every place: but, unfortunately for the honour of the image, and of the Priest too, he must ask a few more questions to render what was already certain, doubly sure; when, all on a sudden, the image ceased to pay any attention to his questions, and would neither bow nor shake its head any more. He, however, kept on proposing and repeating questions, till at length a little boy put his head from behind the drapery which had concealed him, and said, "Sir, it is not my fault,—the string is broke!" Ah! Demetrius, here was the grand secret of the revelations made by the saint,—*the string*.

Demetrius. This was abominable!

Luke. Only a pious fraud, Demetrius!—a part of the system of deception which has for many ages been carried on in that Church. I wonder that the populace on whose credulity the wretch had been practising did not take the string and convert it into a cat-o'-nine-tails, and soundly flagellate him. This is a part of that mystery of iniquity which St. Paul said had be-

gun to work in his day, but which could not then be fully manifested,—a system of iniquity carried on by “Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.)

Demetrius. I begin to suspect that a system of religion which allows the practice of pious frauds, as they are called, cannot be of God.

Luke. Most assuredly not, Demetrius; for God abhors all deceit: he requires simplicity and godly sincerity in all we do; and threatens to punish all liars, whether in trade, in politics, or in religion, in the lake of fire with him who is the father of lies. The many recorded convictions of the frauds practised in support of the follies and demoralizing superstitions of Popery, which have not only been winked at, but directly sanctioned, by the rulers of the Papal Church, incontestably place her among that class of criminals, described by the inspired writer, as those “*who make a lie.*” The whole system of image worship is a system of deception. Jeremiah, speaking on this subject, saith, “His molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them: they are vanity, and the work of errors.” (Jer. x. 14, 15.)

Demetrius. I wish I had been any thing but an image maker. But have you any other reason for being an enemy to images, besides those which you have mentioned?

Luke. Yes, Demetrius, a more weighty reason than because the practice is either *foolish* or *heathenish*, though these are quite sufficient to lead me to despise it: I am an enemy to it, chiefly, because it is *idolatrous*, and exposes image worshippers to eternal death.

Demetrius. Do you think, then, that all image worshippers are idolaters?

Luke. Allow me to answer this question, Demetrius, by asking another. What is an idolater?

Demetrius. He is, I suppose, an idol worshipper.

Luke. And what is an idol, Demetrius?

Demetrius. I do not consider myself competent to answer that question, and shall therefore feel obliged if you will answer it.

Luke. An idol, in the general sense in which it is used in Scripture, is the *image* of any creature, whether animate or inanimate, to which religious worship is paid. Take, for example, the following passages:—Manasseh “set a *carved image*, the *idol* which he had made, in the house of God.” (2 Chron. xxxiii. 7.) “Mine *idol* hath done them, and my *graven image*, and my *molten image*, hath commanded them.” (Isa. xlvi. 5.) “And they made a *calf*” (that is, the image of a calf) “in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the *idol*.” (Acts vii. 41, compared with Deut. ix. 16.) “Ye have seen their abo-

minations, and their *idols*, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them." (Deut. xxix. 17.) Josiah the King "put away the *images* and the *idols*, and all the abominations." (2 Kings xxiii. 24.) "Their *idols* are silver and gold, the work of men's hands." (Ps. cxv. 4.) I could produce many other texts to prove that an image of any kind which is the object of religious worship is an idol. Is not he, then, who worships an image, an idolater?

Demetrius. So, certainly, the Heathen were, because the objects represented by their images were not God, and his holy angels, and saints, but heathen warriors and legislators, and I know not who besides, which, in consideration of the benefits they had conferred upon the world when they lived in it, were supposed after death to be deified.

Luke. Yes, Demetrius, I know this is the way the Priests in your Church endeavour to parry the charge of idolatry, and to throw dust into the eyes of their flock; but it will not do, as I shall soon convince you. You remember, Demetrius, that the Israelites once made an image, and worshipped it. Whom was that image intended to represent? A heathen warrior or legislator? Neither the one nor the other; but Jehovah himself. Hence they said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out

of the land of Egypt." (Exodus xxxii. 4.) They meant either that the image itself, or that the God represented by it, had brought them out of the house of bondage. Yet though they "offered burnt offerings and peace offerings" to this golden image, as the representative of the God who had delivered them, the anger of the Lord was kindled, and he said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." (Exod. xxxii. 9, 10.)

Demetrius. I am satisfied that the golden calf was worshipped in honour of the God who delivered them from Egypt, and that that God was none other than Jehovah himself; and I must also confess, however reluctantly, that God was angry with them for it.

Luke. Yes, Demetrius, and he is angry with all image worshippers, as well as every other kind of idolater; for it is a direct transgression of his own law. Do you, Demetrius, remember the second commandment?

Demetrius. I do. It runs thus, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"——

Luke. Stop, Demetrius; you are repeating the third.

Demetrius. No, indeed, Sir, I am repeating the second.

Luke. No, no, it is the third, I say. But if that be the second, pray what is the first?

Demetrius. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." That is the first.

Luke. Is that the whole of the first?

Demetrius. Yes, the whole; for the second immediately follows.

Luke. Then, Demetrius, your Priests have mutilated the divine law, and have robbed you of one of the commandments of God. The second commandment runs thus: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God," &c. (Exod. xx. 4, 5.) Did you never hear this commandment before, Demetrius?

Demetrius. I have heard Protestants say, that the Popish Priests had left out part of the ten commandments; but I thought it was a slander, for I never imagined they could be so wicked.

Luke. So wicked, Demetrius! This is nothing to what they have done. They have robbed their people, in Popish lands, generally, and in Protestant countries, partially, of the Bible altogether. But can you, Demetrius, conjecture why they have omitted this commandment?

Demetrius. I think, Sir, a child may perceive the reason.

Luke. You are right, Demetrius; for this forbids, as plainly as language can forbid, the worship of the likeness of any thing in heaven or upon earth, whether that be the likeness of angels, or Christ, or the holy Trinity, or the Virgin Mary, or the cross, or any thing else. Let this be believed, and away goes image worship for ever. They know that their abominable idolatry would be detected, were their people acquainted with this commandment of Jehovah.

Demetrius. Your information at once astonishes and shocks me.

Luke. The fact horrifies me, Demetrius. I pity, and tremble for the men who dare thus to accommodate God's holy law to their vile system; and I cannot help thinking that such daring mutilators of divine truth are, under the mask of a Christian profession, complete infidels at heart.

Demetrius. I think there is strong ground for such a suspicion. But seeing that image worship is so extremely foolish, so perfectly heathenish, and so entirely idolatrous, when and how did it find its way into the Christian church?

Luke. Images found their way into the Church, perhaps, about the close of the fourth

century. The first record I have been able to discover refers to the beginning of the fifth century. Then the image of the Virgin Mary, "holding in her arms the infant Jesus, together with the images of those who, during their residence on earth, had acquired the reputation of superior sanctity, were honoured with a distinguished situation in the church, and in many places invoked with a peculiar species of worship; which was supposed to draw down into the images the propitious presence of the saints, or celestial beings, they represented."* There were pictures of Christ, and probably images too, long before the fifth century; but these were not the objects of religious worship, though of some of them many fabulous miracles are recorded,—some by Eusebius, who himself evidently did not believe them; others by Evagrius Scholasticus, a Popish writer in the sixth century, a man of a strong faith, who records them with great seriousness, and who most evidently could swallow any camel without the least difficulty.

Demetrius. Then image worship was not introduced by the Apostles!

Luke. By the Apostles, Demetrius? Wherever the Apostles went, they preached that the people should turn from "*dumb idols*" to serve

* Gregorie's Christian Church, vol. i., pp. 259, 260.

the living God. No, it was not till "the mystery of iniquity" had long worked, that this abomination exalted itself. And when it first appeared, and for a long time after, it met with the most decided opposition.

The first spirit of opposition to image worship originated with the Emperor Bardanes. He was a zealous Monothelite, whose opinions had been condemned by the sixth general Council. Having convened a Synod who condemned the acts of that Council, he ordered the painting which represented that assembly, and which had been hung up in the great church, to be torn down. He also sent an order to the Roman Pontiff, to remove all images and pictures out of all the churches. But, instead of obeying the imperial decree, the haughty Bishop added to the other pictures and images the picture of the sixth general Council, which he caused to be put up in the several porches of St. Peter's church. And so great was the influence of the Pontiff, that he stirred up the people against their Sovereign, (whom, by a Council at Rome, he had previously condemned as an apostate,) to such a degree that, in the year following, they deprived him of the throne.

The dispute, however, broke out with redoubled fury under Leo the Isaurian. Leo, unable to bear any longer the excessive height to which image worship had been carried, and the sharp

railleries and serious reproaches which this idolatrous service drew upon the Christians from the Jews and Saracens, determined by the most vigorous proceedings to root out at once this growing evil. For this purpose he published an edict, A. D. 726, by which it was ordered, not only that the worship of images should be abrogated and relinquished, but also that all the images, except that of Christ's crucifixion, should be removed out of the churches. The superstitious people were enraged at such an attack on their idolatry; and, partly from their own ignorance, but principally in consequence of the perfidious suggestions of the Priests and Monks, who had artfully rendered the worship of images a source of opulence to their churches and cloisters, they were led to regard the Emperor as an apostate, and therefore considered themselves freed from their oath of allegiance, and from all the obligations that attach subjects to their lawful Sovereign. Popes Gregory I. and II. were the authors and ringleaders of these insurrections. Leo, indignant at the conduct of these leaders in the rebellion, ordered a Council to be assembled at Constantinople in 730, in which all images were ordered to be publicly burned. Leo was succeeded by his son Constantine Copronymus, who in the year 754 convened another Council in the same city, at which were present three hundred and thirty-

eight Bishops, in which not only the worship but the use of images was unanimously condemned. Leo IV. who succeeded Constantine, A. D. 775, was equally hostile to the worship and use of images ; but in the year 780 he was poisoned by his profligate spouse, the infamous Irene, the great patroness of image worship, and who in 786 entered into an alliance with Pope Adrian, and caused a Council to be summoned at Nice, which is known by the title of the Second Nicene Council, in which the imperial laws against idolatry were abrogated, image worship restored, and severe punishments denounced against those who maintained that God should be the only object of religious adoration.* Such, Demetrius, is the brief history of the introduction of this kind of idolatry into the Christian church.

Demetrius. I thank you for the information. But if only inferior or subordinate, and not *supreme*, worship be offered, is that idolatry ?

Luke. Were the Heathens idolaters, Demetrius ?

Demetrius. Undoubtedly ; for the Scriptures have pronounced them such.

Luke. Did they offer to their idols subordinate or supreme worship ?

* Mosheim, vol. i., cent. 8., part ii., chap. 3 ; and Gregory, vol. i., pp. 412—423.

Demetrius. I suppose to the idol, *subordinate*, and to the god represented by it, *supreme* worship. I have also understood that they offered different kinds of worship to their idols, according to the supposed rank they held among the gods.

Luke. Were those who presented the richest offerings to the greatest of their gods the only idolaters among the Heathen? or were those who presented inferior offerings to the inferior objects of their worship considered idolaters also?

Demetrius. I understand they were all alike idolaters.

Luke. You are right, Demetrius; for the law of God prohibits the worship, in every kind and degree, of the likeness of any thing in heaven, or upon earth, or any where else. The distinction which the Papists make between supreme and subordinate worship—the former to be paid to God, and the latter to images and angels and saints—is a distinction which has no foundation in Scripture nor in truth. *All* worshippers of images, in the language of Scripture, are idolaters. Besides, Demetrius, the Council of Nice decreed, “that the same worship which was paid to the prototypes, should be paid to their images. Constantine, Bishop of Constance, cried out in the assembly, ‘I pay images the same worship that is due to the life-

giving Trinity; and I anathematize whoever refuses to do likewise, as I do Marcion and Manes.' And this was the voice of the whole Council." *

Demetrius. The Priests have repeatedly told me that they do not absolutely worship, but only pay a relative honour to, images. But if the decree of the Nicene Council be the doctrine of the Popish Church, the worship is not relative but absolute; for it is the same to the image as to the prototype.

Luke. The Priests, though men who seldom blush, are ashamed to own that the thing is quite so gross. Yet, Demetrius, the practice of the Papal Church to this day is in exact accordance with this doctrine. It ordains that the worship of *latria* shall be paid to the cross; but the worship of *latria* is the highest worship that can be paid to God himself; therefore, as the cross is not God, but only an idol or image, the worship of the cross must be rank idolatry.

Demetrius. I am fully convinced that image worship, and the use of images in religion, is forbidden by the law, and is idolatrous. May God forgive my past idolatry! and from this hour I resolve, his grace assisting, that I will never kneel before an image again as long as I live. With my present views, were I to con-

• Popish Mass, page 28.

tinue an image worshipper, I should seal my damnation ; for no idolater shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) But there is another subject nearly allied to this,—the worship of angels and saints,—on which I should be glad to hear your opinion. Suppose, without the intervention of images, we address our prayers to them, is there any thing idolatrous or wrong in that ?

Luke. Do you, Demetrius, consider your prayers to saints and angels an act of religious worship ?

Demetrius. Most assuredly we do, as much as prayer to God himself: hence we offer our prayers upon our bended knees to them, and put our trust in them as those who are to procure the favours we solicit.

Luke. Do you in seasons of distress make your solemn vows to the Virgin Mary or some other saint ; and when delivered, do you ascribe the glory of the deliverance to them ?

Demetrius. Indeed we do, though the vows are not always faithfully performed. One of the faithful, being in a storm at sea, “vowed to the Virgin Mary that he would offer at her altar a candle as big as the mast of a ship, if she sent him safe home ; but being asked, by one that heard him make the vow, how he could pretend to perform it, he answered, that if he got safe on shore, the good-natured

Virgin would be contented with a farthing candle.”*

Luke. The fellow was a rogue, Demetrius ; and, if I had been the Virgin, he should have had a sound ducking for his knavery. But, Demetrius, do you not perceive that by calling upon saints or angels in seasons of distress to deliver you, and by thanking and praising them for that deliverance, you ascribe to them the honour which is due only to God? who hath said, “ Call upon *me* in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify *me*.” (Psalm l. 15.)

Demetrius. I acknowledge it does appear so; yet though these are worshipped, they are not worshipped as the supreme God, but as creatures.

Luke. Granted, but still they are worshipped, and the worship of all creatures is positively and absolutely prohibited. “ It is written,” said our Lord to Satan, “ Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve.” (Luke iv. 8.) Here *all* creature worship is excluded, and the worship of God alone established. If the argument of our Lord do not prove this, it is worth nothing. Satan had offered to do more for him, than the worshippers of the Virgin Mary ordinarily expect from her, on condition that he would worship him: our

* Popish Mass, page 45.

Lord replied that he could not do this ;—why ? Because he was the devil ? No, but because the divine law had appointed the Lord of heaven and earth to be the exclusive object of worship.

Demetrius. The thing is most obvious ; and if to worship the creature instead of the Creator be idolatry, then I am perfectly convinced that the worship paid to saints and angels by the faithful, as the Priests call us, is idolatry.

Luke. You are right Demetrius ; and the thing is as foolish as it is wicked. Were creature worship lawful, which it most plainly is not, we ought to be sure of two things before we select them as the objects of our confidence : first, we should be quite sure that they can hear us ; and secondly, that they can and will help us. Now, Demetrius, what evidence can you produce to show either of these ?

Demetrius. Are not angels ministering spirits, who minister to the heirs of salvation ?

Luke. They are, Demetrius. But can you tell me who these angels are ?

Demetrius. I do not pretend to such knowledge.

Luke. Are they the same angels who minister to all the saints ? Or has each saint his particular angel ?

Demetrius. I don't know ; but I have always understood that every one of the faithful has his attendant angel.

Luke. You, Demetrius, I suppose, have been an angel worshipper.

Demetrius. I have worshipped several.

Luke. Were you sure that these heard you, or that they were not farther from you than the Georgium Sidus, when you called upon them?

Demetrius. I was told to worship them; but, if my salvation depended upon it, I could not tell whether they heard me or not.

Luke. Angel worshippers and Baal worshippers are in the same predicament, Demetrius; and to the former, as to the latter, the cutting irony of the Prophet may be applied,—“Cry aloud,—either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.” (1 Kings xviii. 27.) And as you cannot tell which angel, or whether any, is within hearing; so neither can you know which saint, or whether any, can hear you; and, if they do hear you, whether they either can or will help you. I have already proved the absurdity of creature-worship in reference to the Virgin Mary; * and the same arguments are equally applicable to saints and angels. But why do you, Demetrius, worship either? Have you any precept or precedent for it in the Bible?

Demetrius. I have been informed that St.

John worshipped an angel. And if he did so, his example may be safely followed, though there may be no precept directly enjoining it.

Luke. Yes, Demetrius, the Apostle says, when the angel had narrated the things contained in the revelation, "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things." But, did the angel permit him to worship him? No; he said, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the Prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." (Rev. xxii. 8, 9.) We also read of worshipping angels in St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians: "Let no man," says the Apostle, "beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and *worshipping of angels*, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." And again, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility." (Col. ii. 18—23.) You see, Demetrius, that angel worship, instead of being sanctioned, is directly opposed, by the Bible. John tells you that if you would worship them, they would not permit you to do so; and Paul absolutely forbids it, and says that those who teach the doc-

trine are "vain" men, and men of "fleshly minds," who would "deceive" or "beguile" you.

Demetrius. I perceive the Priests have beguiled me ; for many thousands of hours have I thrown away in angel and saint, as well as image, worship, thinking these were the only ways by which I could succeed in obtaining what I wanted. But now I clearly perceive that the whole is mere delusion. The Priests told me that saints and angels were friends at court, who have great power with the King of heaven, and who could procure any favour they pleased for those who prayed to them ; whereas now I distinctly perceive the Bible expressly forbids all application to be made to them.

Luke. Yes, Demetrius, it does ; but it shows us how we may apply successfully ;—not through the mediation of angels or saints, whether male or female, but through *his* mediation who has said, "I am the way ;" for as there is but "one God," so also there is but "one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5.) Trust your cause in the hands of this Mediator, and you are safe, Demetrius ; for no one ever trusted in him and was confounded. Besides, you are always sure of his hearing you ; for in him the divine and human natures are united, and therefore he is ever present wherever you are.

Demetrius. I have always been told that

though Christ Jesus is the *chief* Mediator, yet all the angels and saints in heaven, and indeed all good people on earth too, are subordinate or inferior mediators.

Luke. I know your Priests teach this doctrine; but, Demetrius, whether shall we believe St. Paul, who says there is but *one* Mediator, or your Priests, who say there are *thousands*?

Demetrius. I suppose we should believe the Apostle.

Luke. I suppose so too. That God has been pleased to promise both to hear and answer the prayers of his servants through this "one Mediator," is a doctrine with which the Scriptures abound; and of the power of faithful fervent prayer many important facts are recorded, as in the case of Moses, (Num. xi. 2,) Elijah, (James v. 17, 18,) Job, (xlii. 8—10,) and others. It is true also that Christians are commanded to pray for each other and for all men; but there is not the slightest intimation in any part of the sacred volume that angels or departed saints are engaged in this work; much less is it commanded that prayer should be made to them that they might pray for us. This, Demetrius, St. Paul calls "voluntary humility" and "will-worship," which God condemns.

Demetrius. But is there not one instance on record of a man praying to a saint in paradise?

Luke. There is, Demetrius, and only one.

But the individual, when he offered the prayer, was not an inhabitant of this world, but in hell. It was Dives, who requested Abraham to send Lazarus, that he might dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool his tongue. But Abraham said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." (Luke xvi. 25, 26.) The bad success with which he met, Demetrius, I think you will not consider a very encouraging precedent for praying either to saints or angels.

Demetrius. The very reverse,—the most discouraging imaginable. I regret that I have suffered myself to be so long befooled by the Priests, instead of reading the Scriptures for myself; but for this, in the absence of all precept, and of all example, except that of a damned soul, whose prayer was unsuccessful, and in the very teeth of apostolic admonition and command, I never should have wasted my time, and insulted the one and only Mediator, Christ Jesus, by putting my cause into the hands of others, who, for any thing I know, never either saw or heard me. But henceforward,

instead of turning to any saint or angel, I will seek unto God, and unto God will I commit my cause.

Luke. I greatly commend your resolution, Demetrius; and my prayer to God is, that it may be permanent, and that you may uniformly act upon it. Make the word of God your rule of faith, and experience, and worship, and practice. And should your Priest have the impudence to forbid you to read the holy Scriptures, tell him they are as much given to you as to him; that Jesus Christ has commanded you not only to read, but to search them; (John v. 39;) and that you are as capable of understanding what Christ and his Apostles teach as he is. Image and saint and angel worship, Demetrius, found their way into the Christian church in a night of great ignorance of scriptural Christianity. They all have the same origin, and that origin is pagan. I have not time to converse longer with you at present; but I have a paper in my hand, which I shall now give you, which you may read at your leisure, and which will abundantly prove the correctness of my statement. I have taken it from a very valuable work, repeatedly referred to already, "The Popish Mass;" but, that the resemblance between Paganism and Popery may appear at one glance, I have taken the liberty to new-model it. Here it is, Demetrius: farewell: read it

attentively, and all the Popish Priests in the universe will never, unless you deliberately turn Pagan, be able to make you either a saint or angel worshipper any more whilst you breathe.

THE PAPER.

PAGANISM.

“1. The Platonists and Pythagoreans held, that there are vast numbers of intermediate powers dwelling in the airy regions between the highest ether and our earth, by whom our prayers and desires are carried up to the gods, and to whom the management of things here below is committed; and that to them religious worship is to be paid. Another heathen writer, Apuleius, who lived in the second century, says, ‘These are the messengers who carry the prayers of men to the gods, and bring back gifts from the gods to men. They go and come to convey hence prayers, thence supplies. They are, as it were, interpreters between gods and men, and bearers of salutations.’ It was commonly taught among the Heathen, that the worshipping of inferior deities, as well as images, was necessary to help human infirmity; and that, for

POPERY.

“1. The Church of Rome says, that the one God who is supreme Lord and Master of all, is attended, honoured, and served by numbers of inferior deities, whom she calls by the soft names of angels and saints, though she sometimes calls them gods too, as Divus Paulus, Divus Augustinus, &c. She says, they are so many messengers, interpreters, and mediators between God and men, carrying petitions to heaven, &c. She prays to them, and pays them religious worship; she considers them as so many guardians of mankind; she honours the sepulchres of the saints by worshipping their relics, &c.; she has divided the administration of the universe into so many departments, for each of which she has appointed one or other of the subaltern deities.

PAGANISM.

the instruction of the vulgar, the gods ought to be represented under human form.

"2. The Heathens had their mother of god, nay, and mother of all the gods.

"3. The Heathens neglected the worship of the true God, according as the popular deities came into vogue.

POPERY.

"2. The Papists, too, have *their* mother of God, 'the Virgin Mary,' who is the prime minister and grand superintendent of all. She is called Queen of angels and saints, nay, and of the whole universe. As God she is sometimes worshipped. They ask her to establish them in rest and peace; to forgive their sins; by her grace to bring them to the light of faith; to heal all their wounds, and deliver them from all evil; and to receive them at the hour of death.

"3. The Papists very seldom call upon the true God; and when they do, they join the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, and other saints, with him, for fear he could not, at least should not, do the business without them. They have such confidence in those saints, that it is one of them they always call upon when they are in distress. It is to them they make their vows, and to them they return their thanks, when they are delivered out of danger.

PAGANISM.

"4. The Heathens would not allow any deceased man or woman to be worshipped with divine honours till they were canonized. Thus Tertullian says, 'The fate of each of your gods depends upon the approbation of your Senate. Such or such a one is not to be honoured, because he had not a majority of voices in his favour. Your gods stand or fall, according as they are received or rejected by the suffrages of men here upon earth.'

"5. Minutius Felix reproaches the Heathens for representing their gods as employed in the vilest offices. Thus Hercules is represented turning dung out of stables; Apollo is cow-herd to Admetus; Neptune is hired by Laomedon to build the walls of Troy, &c."

POPERY.

"4. No one can be honoured as a saint, by the Papists, without the consent and approbation of the Pope and his conclave. But these being obtained, then he is invoked in the public offices and prayers of the Church. He has temples dedicated to him, and altars erected to his memory. Feasts are instituted, and masses said, in his honour. Hymns are composed in his praise. His image is set up to be worshipped. His relics are collected and preserved, and set upon the same altar with their host. In a word, people flock from all sides to kiss his ashes, his bones, his hair, and every thing belonging to him; and pay him the same adoration and honour they pay to God; nay, a great deal more, for they never call upon God all the while.

"5. The Papists represent their saints as sometimes employed in mean and scandalous offices. Thus the Virgin Mary is represented to have come down from heaven to support a highway robber that hung on a gibbet, because he had an extraordinary devotion for her. Another time she turns tailor-

PAGANISM.

POPERY.

ess, and comes down from heaven to stitch St. Thomas a Becket of Canterbury's gown, which was ripped in the shoulders. Another time she assists certain Monks to wipe the sweat off their faces while they were at work. * All these, and a thousand other splendid miracles, said to have been wrought by the mother of God, are avowed by the Romanists, and recorded in their books."

How awfully has the "mystery of iniquity" worked in the Papal Church! a Church which, in numerous instances, has adopted heathen rites, and ceremonies, and usages, to which she has applied Christian names, forgetting that names are altogether arbitrary and do not in any degree alter the nature of the things thus named. Never did the heathen world more awfully degenerate from pure patriarchal religion, even when they "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things," (Rom. i. 23,) than have Papists degenerated from the simple doctrines and institutions of Christianity. The Pagan and the Papist, in their wise attempts to improve

* See Meagher's Popish Mass, pp. 38—48.

and accommodate religion to the ignorant and superstitious, have alike "become fools." In one particular indeed the Papist has discovered much wisdom : his corrupt system has given the Priesthood a domination over their people more absolute than was ever exercised in feudal times, by any Baron over his vassals,—a *spiritual* domination, which at once makes them the objects of their fear and hope, and which, before the passing of the Mortmain Act, was eminently the instrument of enriching themselves and their apostate Church. But since the passing of that Act, which was made to hinder the Popish Priesthood from robbing families of the property of their fathers, and reducing them to a state of beggary, the bequests to their Church in this country have been comparatively insignificant.

Is it wonderful that intelligent persons who see Christianity, not as it is in the Bible, but as it is in Popery,—Christianity *paganized*,—is it wonderful that *they* should think it a mere fable, and become infidels? It would be wonderful were it otherwise. Popery is the hotbed of infidelity ; and should any great revolution take place in any Popish nation, conducted on the principles of the French revolution, it will again be seen, as in that case, that A NATION OF PAPISTS WILL SOON BECOME A NATION OF ATHEISTS.

DIALOGUE IV.

ON CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION.

Peter and O'Brien.

Peter. WHAT! is this my honest neighbour O'Brien? When you first hove in sight, I took you for some English non-resident landlord, you appeared so fine. Did I not know that you are already married, I should have thought you were going in search of a wife. But pray why are you in your holiday dress to-day?

O'Brien. Why, now, I wonder indeed that your honour should ask me such a question, when your honour knows as well as I do, that this is Shrove-Tuesday.

Peter. True enough, I know it is Shrove-Tuesday; a day, O'Brien, famous for pancakes; and, in many places, not less noted for cock-fighting and throwing at cocks, the brutal remains of heathenish and barbarous customs,

which neither the "march of intellect" nor the progress of Christianity has entirely destroyed. But surely you have not dressed so fine to go either to a pancake-feast or to a cock-fight!

O'Brien. No, your honour, indeed I have not; for though I have no objection either to pancakes or to cock-fights, I am on very different business to-day. This is *Shrove* or *Shriven* (which, I am told, learned men say is the old Saxon word for *confession*) day. And in obedience to the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church, I am going to confess all my sins; and therefore I have clothed myself in my best attire.

Peter. What! To confess all the sins of the whole of your past life?

O'Brien. No, thanks to the blessed Virgin, and Father Dominic, I need not do that; for, through her kind intercession, and his absolving power, I have only the last six months' sins to confess. All the rest are gone as completely as if they were drowned in the Lethe. You know, Sir, short reckonings make long friends; and I make a point of never having more than six months' sins to answer for at a time.

Peter. Six months' sins! Do you think, O'Brien, that you can remember them all? But perhaps you have written them all down, and will simply read them, that there may be no omission.

O'Brien. Not I, indeed. I will confess as

many as I can remember, and I think I can remember nearly the whole ; but lest any should have escaped me, I will add, "For these, and all other, my sins, which I cannot at this present call to my remembrance, I am heartily sorry." *

Peter. Well, I think it very right that you should add such a clause. But you very much surprise me by saying, you think you "can remember nearly the whole." I suspect your notion of sin is not quite correct. Pray will you have the goodness to tell me what you think sin is ?

O'Brien. Why, every body knows what sin is ; at least every good Catholic is well acquainted with it.

Peter. I entertain some doubts on that subject, O'Brien ; and you will greatly oblige me by informing me what sin is.

O'Brien. Well, then, your honour, I will define it. Sin is of two kinds,—one against God, the other against the Church. The first is the breach of all or any of the Ten Commandments. The second is disobedience to the orders of the Church ; such as eating flesh in Lent ; or eating more than one meal on a fast-day ; or working on Good-Friday ; or omitting to pray to the blessed Virgin and the saints, as often as the Priest appoints ; or not always reverently bowing

* Garden of the Soul, p. 211.

at the name of Jesus ; or not making the tip of the tongue touch the bottom lip, to let the Priest lay Jesus Christ upon it ; or biting him with the teeth, instead of patiently waiting till he melt away in the mouth ; or swallowing him too abruptly ; or spitting him up again too soon ; with many other things equally important. *

Peter. I perceive, O'Brien, that a man may be a grievous offender against the Church. But pray, who authorized the Church to prescribe such laws ?

O'Brien. Indeed, your honour, I cannot answer your question ; but the Priest says it is right and proper to obey the Church in these and in all other things ; and that he who does not obey, is a rebel ; and that rebellion against the Church is worse than the sin of witchcraft.

Peter. Obey the Church ! Will you tell me, O'Brien, what you mean by the Church ?

O'Brien. Indeed, and I will. I mean the Holy Roman Catholic Apostolic Church.

Peter. Is that the same as the Christian Apostolic Church ?

O'Brien. Of course it is, and the only Christian Apostolic Church in the world : all other Churches are full of heresies, and in a state of damnation.

* Garden of the Soul, p. 231.

Peter. Did my namesake St. Peter, and St. Paul, and St. James, and St. John, and St. Jude, the writers of the canonical Epistles ; and St. Luke, the writer of one of the Gospels, and of the Acts of the Apostles, enjoin obedience to the above orders? If they did, I shall thank you to mention chapter and verse, that I may examine what they say.

O'Brien. Your honour cannot expect me to do this; for you very well know that I do not possess a Bible, and that the Priest will not suffer me to read it, lest it should lead me away from the faith.

Peter. Your Priest, O'Brien, is wise in his generation; for were you to read the Bible, it would most assuredly lead you out of his erroneous and corrupt Church. In the Bible, O'Brien, there is not one word about the nonsense which you say your Church commands. The Roman Apostolic Church, and the Christian Apostolic Church, in these and in many other particulars, bear no more resemblance to each other, than a monkey to a man. But without animadverting farther on your second class of sins, which only furnishes matter for pity, or contempt, or ridicule, or merriment, to all who receive the Bible as their only directory and rule of faith, or whose understandings are sufficiently clear to distinguish a square from a triangle; without, I say, dwelling longer upon

these, I shall be happy to know whether you understand what the commandments teach?

O'Brien. Of course I do; for though I have not been allowed to read the Bible, I have had a peep at *these* in books of devotion, which our Priests provide for our instruction.

Peter. You may well say "a peep;" for though you think you have read the whole, you have only seen an imperfect abstract, in which they omit the second commandment, and, to make up the deficiency, divide the tenth into two.

O'Brien. Why have they done this?

Peter. Because the second commandment forbids all image worship. To publish this, therefore, would open the eyes of their followers to the idolatry of their paganized Church, and would lead them, should they revere the divine word, to renounce her communion altogether. But waving all farther observations on the wickedness of thus deceiving and destroying their deluded votaries, pray, have you considered the spirituality of these commandments?

O'Brien. I don't know what you mean by their spirituality: I shall thank you to explain.

Peter. Human laws, O'Brien, have respect to outward actions only, because the principles from which they proceed are hidden, and cannot be penetrated by man. But divine laws apply to the inner man, to the secret thoughts and af-

fections of the heart, from which flow all outward acts. Human lawgivers judge only "according to the sight of the eye, and the hearing of the ear;" but the divine Lawgiver judgeth righteous judgment,—he searcheth the heart and trieth the reins. Hence our Lord pronounces unchaste desire, "adultery;" and hatred, "murder." On this principle, he who confides in the creature rather than in God, breaks the first commandment; he who is devoted to the creature more than to God, breaks the second; he who thinks irreverently of God, violates the third; and so on. Now, supposing this to be a correct view of the Ten Commandments, do you think you "can nearly recollect all your sins?"

O'Brien. Indeed, your honour, if things be so, I am afraid I cannot remember the one thousandth part of them.

Peter. And are not things so? Have you any thing to object to this view of the divine law?

O'Brien. It is such a view of it as I never had before, and makes me a much greater sinner than I ever imagined myself to be; yet I don't see how I can object to it, for, as you have observed, "God searcheth the heart," and therefore his law must apply to all its operations. I now perceive that I was wrong in thinking my sins so few, that I could nearly remember them all.

Peter. It gives me much pleasure, O'Brien, to be instrumental in correcting your views on this subject. When a man compares himself with the mere *letter* of the law, his sins appear as few in number as the spots upon the sun; but when he compares himself with its *spirit*, they appear as countless as the stars, or as the sands upon the sea shore. But you say you are going to confess your sins: pray where are you going to confess them?

O'Brien. I am going to Arklow.

Peter. To Arklow! What, to the place where the rebels in 1798 were headed by Father Murphy, that infamous miscreant, who assured his infatuated followers that the enemies' balls could not hurt them, for they were fighting the Lord's battles; in proof of which he showed them bullets which were flattened, and which, he said, had been shot at him! But why go to Arklow, or any other place? Why not make confession in your own closet?

O'Brien. Why? For this plain reason,—the holy Father is not there, and it is to him I must make confession.

Peter. Why make confession to him, O'Brien?

O'Brien. Because the Church says St. James commands it in the fifth chapter of his catholic Epistle; and that, without such confession, the Priest cannot grant absolution.

Peter. The Church says right, O'Brien; for

she cannot grant absolution either without or *with* confession. As no man can redeem his brother, so neither can he absolve him from his sins. I am, however, glad that you quote Scripture in vindication of your practice. Now the thing will soon be decided; for I have my New Testament in my pocket. The passage you refer to runs thus: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be *healed*." It is true, that in the Rhemish, which is the Popish, version of the New Testament, instead of "faults," we have "sins," and instead of "healed," we have "saved." The first word, which in the Protestant version is translated "faults," and in the Popish version, "sins," signifies an offence or trespass, whether against God or man, and therefore either word may be retained: but what authority have the Papists for translating the last word "saved," instead of "healed?" In every other place they have translated it "healed." Of this you may satisfy yourself by referring to the following texts,—viz., "Lord, I am not worthie that thou shouldest enter vnder my rooffe, but only say the word, and my boy shal be *healed*. And Iesus said to the Centurion, As thou hast believed, be it done to thee. And the boy was healed in the same hour." (Matt. viii. 8, 13.) "The hart of this people is waxed grosse, and with their eares they haue

heavily heard, and their eyes they haue shut : lest any time they may see with their eyes, and heare with their eares and understand with their hart and be conuerted, and I may *heale* them." (Matt. xiii. 15.) "Then Iesus answering, said to her, O woman, great is thy faith : be it done to thee as thou wilt : and her daughter was made *hole* from that hour." (Matt. xv. 28.) "And there were Pharisees sitting, and Doctors of Law, that were come out of euery town of Galilee, and Iewrie, and Hierusalem ; and the vertue of our Lord was to *heale* them." (Luke v. 17.) "And al the multitude sought to touch him, because vertue went forth from him, and *healed* al." (Luke vi. 19.) "And Iesus rebuked the vncleane spirit, and *healed* the boy." (Luke ix. 42.) "And when he had touched his eare, he *healed* him." (Luke xxii. 51.) "The man was more than fourtie yeres old, in whom the signe of *health* had been wrought." (Acts iv. 22.) Can you, O'Brien, inform me why they have substituted the word *saved* for *healed*, in this place ?

O'Brien. Indeed I cannot ; but perhaps you can inform me.

Peter. The reason lies so near the surface, that there is no difficulty in perceiving it. They have foisted in the word "*saved*," for the sake of establishing their docile and implicit followers in the belief of priestly absolution : hence the

Rhemish Annotators on this passage say, "The Protestants do not well like to have in one sentence, Priests praying over the sick, anointing them, forgiving them their sins, confession, and the like." The Protestants, O'Brien, don't "well like" to have that filiated on St. James, which he never taught. But to practise deceit upon the simple ones, has ever been a prominent feature of Popery.

O'Brien. Well, whatever they may have said or done, you will not deny that confession of sin is here taught.

Peter. Yes, I do deny that Popish confession of sin, or anything like it, is taught in this passage. For, first, the confession is to be made in a time of sickness: "Is any sick among you, let him call for the Elders." Whereas Popish confession has no relation to sickness, of which you are a healthful witness this morning. Secondly, it is to be made, that the sick person may be healed,—that "the Lord may raise him up." Thirdly, it is not to be made to a Priest, or Presbyter, or Elder, but to each other: "Confess your faults one to another," that mutual offences may be followed by mutual forgiveness, agreeably to the doctrine of our Lord in Matt. v. 25; vi. 14, 15; xviii. 35: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him;" and, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Fa-

ther will also forgive you : but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." And, fourthly, the Elders, or, as you call them, the Priests, to be sent for, not to confess the person, but to pray and anoint him with oil, are to possess the gift of healing. Whereas your Priests have not this gift. They indeed anoint with oil ; which in their case is a vain superstition, for no effect follows ; but in the case of the Apostles and primitive Elders on whom was bestowed the gift of healing, it was a sensible token to the sick person himself, and to those who were present, that a miracle of healing was going to be performed.

O'Brien. You quite surprise me. I was taught to believe that this passage most clearly proved the absolute necessity of making confession to the Priest ; but, according to your statement, I perceive that the Priest is as much bound to make confession to me, as I am to the Priest.

Peter. Exactly the same, O'Brien. If you have injured the Priest, you must acknowledge or confess to him that injury ; and if he has injured you, he must do the same ; and you must mutually forgive each other, or your heavenly Father, as we have seen, will not forgive you.

O'Brien. What ! Then have I power to for-

give the sins of the Priest? Why, surely this is turning things all topsy-turvy.

Peter. To you, O'Brien, it is no doubt a new doctrine, and to your Priest a most unpalatable one; and that for two reasons: first, it reduces the holy Father to a level with other sinners; and, secondly, if he has received their money for absolving them, they may hope, in all fairness, to receive a portion of it back again for absolving him. You both stand on the same level. In the same sense in which the Priest has power to forgive you, you have power to forgive him; that is, you may mutually bury in oblivion the injuries which have been either inflicted or received; but except God forgive you both, you must both perish for ever.

O'Brien. I never heard any thing like this before. Your honour, I fear, is a most dangerous heretic; and but that I well sprinkled and crossed myself with holy water this blessed morning, as well as specially put myself under the protection of that "tower of ivory," the immaculate Virgin, I should absolutely be afraid to tarry with you a moment longer; but, being thus shielded, I heed you not, though you should possess not only all the malignity and sophistry of Luther himself, but were also master of all the spells and enchantments of an Egyptian magician.

Peter. I am no magician, O'Brien, and there-

fore you have nothing to apprehend from me ; but you have, all your days, been under the spell of a body of holy conjurors, more dangerous than any of the magicians of Egypt,—men who amuse you with the mummeries and sleight-of-hand tricks of Popery, and who, instead of instructing you in the doctrine of Christ, teach the absurd, irrational, unscriptural, pernicious, and destructive, dogmas of Popery. From the spell of such magicians, O'Brien, I wish to deliver you, and all who are thus spell-bound.

O'Brien. Well, though I don't like to hear you rail either against my religion, or the holy Fathers, yet I fear that some of them are no better and purer than they ought to be. It is true, indeed, they are too holy to enter into the marriage-state ; yet, if rumour be not a great liar, the children of these desolate ones are more than the children of the married. But though such raillery is not pleasant, yet I cannot but acknowledge my obligation to your honour, for your good intention. And I do ingenuously confess that you have placed the text of St. James, to me, in a perfectly new light. But though this passage does not prove the duty of making confession to a Priest, (and truth compels me to admit it does not,) yet I have been informed that the doctrine may be proved beyond the possibility of successful contradic-

tion, from the confessions which were made by leprous persons to the Priests under the Law.

Peter. I suppose you refer to a sentence quoted from the works of the venerable Bede, as he is called by the Rhemish Annotators. It runs thus: "Our daily and little sinnes we confess one to another, vnto our equals, and belieue to be saued by their daily praier; but the uncleanness of the greater leprosy, let us according to the law open to the Priest, and at his pleasure, in what manner and how long time he shall command, let us be careful to be purified."

O'Brien. The identical thing.

Peter. I thought as much. But though the venerable Bede talks of laying open the case to the Priests, and though the Annotators consider this laying open the case to be a priestly confession, yet there is not one word of confession in the whole passage. The following are the words of Moses: "When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the Priest, or unto one of his sons the Priests: and the Priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the Priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean."

If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight be not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the Priest shall shut up him that hath the plague seven days: and the Priest shall look on him the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague in his sight be at a stay, and the plague spread not in the skin; then the Priest shall shut him up seven days more: and the Priest shall look on him again the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague be somewhat dark, and the plague spread not in the skin, the Priest shall pronounce him clean: it is but a scab: and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean. But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin, after that he hath been seen of the Priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen of the Priest again: and if the Priest see that, behold, the scab spreadeth in the skin, then the Priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a leprosy." (Lev. xiii. 2—8.) Now, O'Brien, tell me what there is, either of sin, or the confession of sin, in all this?

O'Brien. Why, your honour, neither the one nor the other is so much as once either named or alluded to. The whole seems to be a medical regulation for the cure and prevention of an infectious and most afflicting disease.

Peter. You are right, O'Brien. The case is a very plain one, and one which can never be

misunderstood by any but Popish Confessors, and those simple ones who see through Popish spectacles. Jewish Priests were not only the Ministers of God, but also the conservators or guardians of the health of the people. The leprosy being an infectious disease, the general good required that persons should, whilst in that state, be separated from the uninfected part of society. But as some ordinary cutaneous diseases resembled the leprosy, it was necessary, in order to prevent those who were affected by them from being treated as lepers, that every disease of this kind should be examined by the Priests, who were the appointed judges in such cases ; and who, if they were in doubt, shut the suspected person up for a certain time, that they might satisfy themselves as to the true character of his distemper. But there is not one word respecting sin, or the confession of sin, either to a Priest or any one else. You might just as soon prove priestly confession from the application of sick persons to medical practitioners, as from the case of the leprous persons.

O'Brien. Indeed, your honour, I am of the same opinion. But though the texts which you have already examined do not teach the doctrine of priestly confession, surely there are others which do.

Peter. No, O'Brien, not one ; and I chal-

lenge the whole body of Popish Priests to prove the contrary.

O'Brien. Then, is sin not to be confessed at all?

Peter. O yes; sin *must* be confessed, or it will not be forgiven. But the confession must be made to Him against whom it has been committed. If against man, to man acknowledge it, and to God too; for though you may sin against God without sinning against man, you cannot sin against man without sinning against God, for every offence against man is a violation of God's law. Sins committed against man must therefore be confessed both to God and man; and sins committed against God, to God only. The confession prescribed by the Scriptures is that which David practised: "I acknowledged my sin unto *thee*, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression *unto the Lord*." (Psalm xxxii. 5.) He who thus "confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 13.)

O'Brien. But though the Scriptures nowhere enjoin confession to a Priest, do not Catholics derive much benefit from confession?

Peter. What benefit, O'Brien?

O'Brien. It relieves their minds from all that had oppressed them before, and operates like an

emetic on a disordered stomach; or, if I may be allowed to change the figure, it cancels a debt which they owed to the Almighty.

Peter. To the *cancelling* part of the benefit, I shall soon call your attention. At present I take up your *emetic* view of confession; a view which furnishes an exceedingly appropriate illustration of Popish confession, for it is a most filthy thing,—filthy in the poor simpletons on whom it acts, and filthy in the Priest into whose ears the abominable impurities are poured. And they return as filthy and impure as they went, and generally more so; which is the natural, not to say necessary, consequence of the vile and obscene ideas suggested by the licentious interrogatories of the Priests, which they are bound to answer. Is it not a fact, O'Brien, that if you don't confess every thing, and that without mental reservation or disguise, you forfeit all the benefits of what your Priests have dignified with the name of the Sacrament of Confession.

O'Brien. Indeed, so I have always been taught.

Peter. Then, O'Brien, priestly confession is pregnant with incalculable mischief, to which I have many and potent objections.

O'Brien. Will your honour have the goodness to state your objections?

Peter. I will state a few: to state all would

occupy much more time than I can at present spare. First: I object to private confession to a Priest, on account of many of the questions which he proposes to the devotee. The questions under the head of what in our Bible is the seventh commandment, but which in yours is the sixth, are so abominably filthy, that they are calculated to excite in all well-ordered minds, disgust and indignation at the wretch who has the impudence to propose them; whilst in persons of a different character they cannot fail to increase the evils which they confess; and in young persons will probably produce effects similar to those which would be produced by the licentiousness of the lobby of one of our theatres, or of a brothel itself.* They indeed,

“Wash to fouler stains.”

Such questions proposed to one of our own sex would be sufficiently odious and disgusting; but for a man, a single man, a Popish Priest, to propose such questions to our wives and daughters and sisters, and to propose these in private, cannot be thought of without horror and indignation. Such an inquisition will, in the first instance, burn the cheek of modesty; but its frequent repetition will blunt those ex-

* Garden of the Soul, pp. 198, 199.

quisitely delicate feelings which adorn the female character, and which are the most effectual guardians of female virtue.

O'Brien. O, but your honour forgets that our Priests are holy men, and men of the sacred order.

Peter. No, O'Brien, I don't forget who your Priests are. This is not the time, O'Brien, or I could furnish a biographical sketch of many who are dead, and of some who are yet alive. I will not say, O'Brien, that there never was a sincere, conscientious, and upright man among them; but I do say, that take them as a body, including the living and the dead, they contain a greater portion of guile, and hypocrisy, and fraud, and cruelty, and sensuality, of the lowest and most beastly kind, than history can supply from any other class of society: and, therefore, my second objection to Popish confession is the character of the Priesthood.

O'Brien. I don't deny that some of them now and then take a little too much whisky, and can sing a smutty song, and put modest females to the blush by their indecent remarks; but this is when in company at the festive board: when engaged in the sacred duties of their profession, they are very different men; the holy spirit of their office rests upon them, and preserves them from either thinking or feeling or acting wrong.

Peter. So far from this being the case, O'Brien, many of them have in the Sacrament of Confession itself seduced and ruined their female penitents. Indeed, in one period of their history, such villanies were so common, that, for decency's sake, it became necessary for Popes to publish bulls forbidding Priests in "the sacramental confession to solicit and provoke, or attempt to solicit and provoke, women to dishonourable actions. Paul IV. (in the year 1561, April 16,) published a bull against such persons, directed to the Archbishop of Seville, beginning, 'Cum sicut super;' and Pius IV., another, on April 6, 1564; and the Supreme Inquisitors General, an edict, approved by Clement VIII. And in the year 1612, in the month of April, it was decreed by Pius V. that all the Inquisitors should be admonished to command the Confessors to abstain from all and every sort of solicitation, and to proceed rigorously against all those who did not. And, finally, there is extant a constitution of Gregory XV., published August 30, 1622, beginning, 'Universi dominici,' in which he confirms the letters or bull of Paul IV., and commands it to be firmly and inviolably observed, not only in the kingdom of Spain, but in all other parts of the Christian world.

"The incontinence of the Priests gave occasion to these edicts and bulls; because, as the

words are, in the bull of Paul IV., ‘ Certain Priests in the kingdom of Spain, and in the cities and dioceses thereof, having cure of souls, or exercising such cure for others, or otherwise deputed to hear the confessions of penitents, have broken out into so heinous an iniquity, as to abuse the Sacrament of Penance in the very act of hearing confessions,’ ‘ by enticing and provoking, or trying and procuring to entice and provoke, penitent women to lewd actions, whilst they are hearing their confession.’

“ When this bull was first brought into Spain, all persons were commanded by a public edict, solemnly published throughout all the churches of the archbishopric of Seville, that whosoever knew or had heard of any Monks or Clergymen who had abused the Sacrament of Confession to these crimes, or had in any manner acted in this vile manner at confession with their daughter or daughters, they should discover him within thirty days to the holy tribunal; and very grievous censures were annexed to such as should neglect or condemn it. When the decree was published, so large a number of women went to the palace of the Inquisitors in the city of Seville only, to make their discoveries of these most wicked Confessors, that twenty Secretaries, with as many Inquisitors, were not sufficient to take the depositions of the witnesses. The Lords Inquisitors, being thus overwhelmed with the

multitude of affairs, assigned another thirty days for the witnesses ; and when this was not sufficient, they were found to appoint the same number a third and a fourth time. However, after so many had been informed against before the Inquisitors, that holy tribunal, contrary to all men's expectations, put a stop to the affair, and commanded all those crimes which were proved by legal evidence to be buried in eternal oblivion." *

Such, O'Brien, have been the abominations connected with Papal confession, according to the showing of your own Church. That things are not so bad now as they then were, we would charitably hope ; yet of this there is no evidence. But as human nature is the same now as then, and as Priests were then reputed as holy as they are at this day, those husbands who allow their wives, and those parents who permit their daughters, to be interrogated in private by such men, the successors of the sanctimonious hypocrites of other times, most unnecessarily expose them at once to the loss of character and of virtue.

O'Brien. Indeed, if I could think the Priests as bad now as it seems they were formerly, I should take pretty good care that neither my wife nor daughter should ever go near them

* Limborch's History of the Inquisition, pp. 327—329.

again. It is indeed true that many strange things are reported of many of the holy Fathers, and of females, who are their reputed nieces, and live with them, and who act as their housekeepers ; but I hope such reports are not true.

Peter. It is very Christian, O'Brien, not too readily to believe evil of any one ; for " charity hopeth all things."

O'Brien. Has your honour any other objection to priestly confession ?

Peter. Yes, O'Brien, I have. My third objection to it is this : it subjects every thing, both domestic and social, to the espionage of the Priest. For in confession he extracts, whenever he pleases, every thing that is either said or done by any member of the family, or even by an occasional visiter. Hence, O'Brien, Protestant families are, in many parts of our dear country, afraid to say any thing on the subject of religion in the presence of their Popish domestics, because they know the Priest will require such domestics to relate all they have heard at the next confession. And should any thing be said in opposition to Popery, he who said it is at once marked ; and should the tragedy of 1798 be acted over again, he would be one of the earliest victims of their sanguinary rage.

O'Brien. God forbid that the Priests should ever encourage another rebellion !

Peter. To your pious prayer, O'Brien, I most sincerely say, Amen. But whether there should be another rebellion or not, it is a most miserable thing to live under the perpetual supervision of a number of Priests, who exercise absolute tyranny over your own servants, and hinder them from observing the pious regulations of your family.

O'Brien. Did your honour ever hear of the Priest doing any thing to hinder one of the faithful from joining in any act of family-worship?

Peter. I wonder that you, O'Brien, should propose such a question; for you cannot possibly be ignorant that in almost every case Popish servants are forbidden by their Priests to attend the family-worship of their Protestant masters; and if at any time they transgress, the Priests enjoin some very severe penance. Sometimes, indeed, their severity produces effects contrary to what they intend. The following anecdote, O'Brien, I received from an authority which I cannot question:—A Popish girl, the servant of a Protestant, went to confession, when the Priest inquired whether she ever attended the family-worship of her master. She honestly replied that she did; when at once he flew into a violent rage, and told her he would make her do a severe penance for her sin. "You shall," said he, "go to such a church-yard," naming it,

"and take up a human skull; you shall carry this skull between your teeth, from that churchyard to another," naming it; "and that shall be your penance." "And, indeed, your reverence, and must I do all that?" "Yes, you must: I'll teach you to worship with heretics." "Then, for sure," replied the girl, "I'll come to confession no more." Nor did she ever go again. The dose, O'Brien, was too strong for her.

O'Brien. Indeed, your honour, I think the Priest carried the thing rather too far. But has your honour any other objection to confession?

Peter. I have, O'Brien. I object to priestly confession, fourthly, because it puts the Priests in possession of all your secrets, and lays you very much at their mercy. Whatever confidence you think you may repose in them, it is a fact that they have repeatedly been known to reveal secrets, and therefore are not to be trusted. They not only violate faith with heretics, (which, according to a decree in the Council of Constance, they have a right to do,) but, if they can gain any thing by it, they will also break faith with you. Suppose, O'Brien, that after having confessed something to the Priest, of which you are deeply ashamed, the discovery of which would at once be ruinous to your character and your peace, and perhaps too to the peace and honour of your family, the

Priest should solicit you to the commission of some crime, threatening exposure if you refused ; in what a miserable dilemma would you be placed ! The probability is, that the fear of exposure would lead you to become the victim of the Priest.

O'Brien. I hope, your honour, I should have virtue enough to resist such a wretch, and to dare him to do his worst. I, however, candidly own, that such a threat held over the head of a female, exquisitely alive to the consequences of the loss of reputation, might lead to a very different result. But I hope better things of our holy Fathers.

Peter. So do I, O'Brien ; yet, as we have seen above, many holy Fathers have been thus abominably wicked ; and what has been, may be. Indeed, if there be any reliance to be placed on ecclesiastical history, as written either by Protestant or by Popish historians, sensuality, and that in its grossest forms, has been a prominent feature in the Papal Clergy. What I wish to impress on your mind, O'Brien, is simply this,—that as private confession to a Priest furnishes the opportunity and the temptation to the most horrible abominations, it becomes all, especially females, who have any regard for their reputation, to avoid it, as they would a house of ill-fame.

O'Brien. Well, I perceive that the Sacra-

ment of Confession is indeed liable to all these abuses. But then your honour forgets, that, on the other hand, it leads to the greatest of all benefits,—absolution.

Peter. No, O'Brien, I don't forget this; but so far from being a benefit, it is an infinitely worse evil than any I have mentioned; it is a soporific which sleeps the sinner to death, and seals his damnation: and this forms my fifth objection to Papal confession. Does the Priest, O'Brien, grant absolution immediately upon confession?

O'Brien. In general he does.

Peter. Then there are some exceptions?

O'Brien. I have heard that in some particular cases the Priest refuses absolution.

Peter. Can you say in which cases?

O'Brien. I really don't remember one at present, your honour.

Peter. But I do. The cases in which absolution is refused are cases in which the penitent either will not pay the price, or, which is equivalent, will not comply with the will of the Priest. The following is a case in point: it is contained in a letter from Father La Chaise, who was Confessor to Louis XIV. of France, to Father Peters, who was Confessor to our Popish King James II. It is in answer to a letter from Father Peters, which contained this question: "What is the best course to be

taken, to root out all heretics?" Father La Chaise recommends two plans of accomplishing this,—*force* and *fraud*; though he evidently prefers the former, wherever practicable. "We have," he says, "converted many thousand heretics in France, in the space of one year, by the power of our dragoons; and by the doctrine of these booted apostles, have turned more in one month than Christ and his Apostles could in ten years." He then goes on to show the difficulty he had to obtain the sanction of Louis to his sanguinary measures. At length, however, a circumstance favourable to the accomplishment of his designs occurred; which he records with great exultation. "At last," he says, "I got the King on the hip; for he had lain with his daughter-in-law, for which I would by no means give him absolution, till he had given me an instrument under his own hand and seal, to sacrifice all the heretics in one day." The King, however, was deeply distressed for what he had done; and through the prompt and resolute exertions of the Prince of Conde, the bloody instrument was forced from the infamous La Chaise, and the letters to every part of France, commanding the immediate massacre of all heretics, which were actually at the post-office, were all recovered, and instantly taken to the King, and burned. This "being all done," he remarks, "the King said,

now his heart was at ease. Now, how he should be eased by the devil, or so well satisfied with a false joy, I cannot tell ; but this I know, that it was a very wicked and ungodly action, as well in His Majesty, as the Prince of Conde, and did not a little increase the burden and danger of His Majesty's sins. I soon gave an account of this affair to several Fathers of our Society, who promised to do their best to prevent the aforesaid Prince doing such another act, which was accordingly done ; for within six days after the damned action, he was poisoned, and well he deserved it. The King also did suffer too, but in another fashion, for disclosing the design unto the Prince, and hearkening unto his counsel. And many a time since, when I have had him at confession, I have shook hell about his ears, and made him sigh, fear, and tremble, before I would give him absolution ; nay, more than that, I have made him beg for it on his knees, before I would consent to absolve him. I set the business of the action before him, by telling the whole story, and how wicked it was, and that it could not be forgiven till he had done some good action to balance that, and expiate the crime. Whereupon he at last asked me what he must do ? I told him that he must root out all heretics from his kingdom. So when he saw there was no rest for him without doing it, he did again give them all into the

power of me and our Clergy, under this condition, that we would not murder them, as he had before given orders ; but that we should by fair means, or force, convert them to the Catholic religion. Now, when we had got the commission, we presently put it in practice ; and what the issue hath been, you very well know." * Thus you see, O'Brien, that when a point is to be carried, such as the murder of heretics, your Priests withhold absolution till that point is accomplished.

O'Brien. I perceive they do ; but in all ordinary cases, after confession is made, immediate absolution is granted.

Peter. But don't they enjoin a previous penance ?

O'Brien. Yes, your honour, they in some cases do enjoin a severe penance ; but the absolution is given before the penance is performed.

Peter. Then, O'Brien, absolution goes before penance, and not penance before absolution. Is not this the honey first, and the sting after ? And is not this also in direct opposition to the doctrine of St. Peter, who, according to the

* The letter from which the above extracts are taken was found in the study of the Duke of Somerset, at Petworth, in Sussex, when it was cleared, nearly fifty years ago. The Duke himself died in 1707, at the age of seventy-four years. He was a personal friend of King William III.

Rhemish version of the New Testament, says, "Do penance for remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?" (Acts ii. 38.) Here penance goes first, and remission or absolution follows after; but yours completely reverses the apostolic order.

O'Brien. I cannot tell what St. Peter says on the subject, for I am not permitted to read the Bible; but—

Peter. I beg your pardon, O'Brien, for interrupting you: but pray who are they who will not permit you to read the Bible?

O'Brien. The Priests.

Peter. The Popish Priests in England say that you are permitted to read the Bible whenever you please.

O'Brien. I beg their Reverences' pardon; but if they say so, they say the thing which is not. In proof of this I could furnish your honour with many recent facts: take, for example, the following:—One Priest was so enraged with some of my neighbours for reading the Bible, that, after severely reproving and threatening them, he with all his fatherly authority commanded them, not only not to read any more, but to be sure and burn every Bible they had. And another Priest, one day meeting with a very good young man, who was a lover of the Bible, and who read it to others, shouted in the presence of many good Catholics who were then

going to mass, "I smell a Bible! I smell a Bible! a hunt! a hunt! tally O! tally O! I'll hunt the Bible out of my parish."

Peter. Well, well, O'Brien, I commend them for their prudence; for, what light is to the owl, and what hot lime is to the slug, such is the Bible to Popery: it will torment and ultimately destroy it. I beg pardon, O'Brien, for interrupting you, and occasioning this digression, and shall thank you now to proceed.

O'Brien. I was saying, your honour, that not being permitted to read the Bible, it was not for me to say what St. Peter had written on the subject; but I was going to add, I simply state the fact that in my case the penance, when any was enjoined, always followed absolution.

Peter. Then, O'Brien, you have often received absolution?

O'Brien. O yes, your honour, I have. For many years I have not failed to receive it twice a year.

Peter. What do you mean by absolution, O'Brien? Do you mean that it frees you only from all Church censures; or that by it all your past sins are really and truly pardoned?

O'Brien. Why, for sure, that all my past sins are really and truly pardoned. According to the Council of Trent, the absolution is not

only declarative, but judicial, and the sentence pronounced by the Priest is as if pronounced by the Judge himself. But the Priest, in absolution, pronounced me pardoned; therefore I am pardoned by the Judge.

Peter. Then was the poor unfortunate Ann Marie Eichlaetter pardoned by the Judge?

O'Brien. I don't know the lady to whom you refer.

Peter. Have you not heard of the case of poor Ann? It is one of the most distressing and villanous that ever stained the annals of history.

O'Brien. No, your honour, I have not; but shall feel obliged if you will relate it.

Peter. The whole detail is too long, but I will give you a brief abstract of it. She was seduced and had a child by a holy Father of great sanctity, of the name of Reimbauer, who was Curate of Randerstadt, and by him was afterwards murdered. This murder was not brought to light till after the lapse of five years. It was then made known to some Confessors, by a young woman who had witnessed the fact. They exhorted her to keep the secret; and that she might do so, one of those holy Fathers wrote an anonymous letter to Riembauer, recommending him to bribe the young woman to silence. But he disregarded this, and Catherine denounced him before the magistrates. He

was brought to trial, when the following charges were preferred against him :—first, of having had a child by the cook of the Curate of Hoskirchen : secondly, of having had a child by Ann Marie Eichlaetter, the servant of the Curate of Hemsheim, and of having assassinated her by cutting her throat with a razor : thirdly, of having had children by a milliner, and another Curate's servant-maid : fourthly, of having had a child by Madelaine Fravenknehit, the daughter of a farmer at Laterbach ; of having swindled her father of 5000 francs ; and of having poisoned the daughter and her mother : fifthly, of having had, at different periods, three children by Ann Weminger, his last kitchen-maid : sixthly, of having forged a certificate of deposit for a sum of 1400 francs : and, lastly, of having caused abortion in two women !

O'Brien. What a monster ! What an infamous wretch !

Peter. Infamous indeed ! But all-infamous as he was, being a Priest, you know he could forgive sin ! And, O'Brien, he granted absolution to poor Ann, and then immediately cut her throat. The following is the account given by the witness on the trial :—Catherine stated that Ann Marie came to the house of Riembauer for the purpose of getting some pecuniary assistance from him. He made her walk into his room. Madelaine, the sister of Catherine,

who was then twelve years old, being anxious to gratify a curiosity not unnatural at her age, looked through the key-hole ; she beheld the Curate holding the young woman extended upon the ground, and pretending to embrace her. She then saw him press her head against the floor, and draw a razor across her throat. Terrified at the sight, Madelaine ran and informed her mother and sister, who went to the door and heard the following conversation between the assassin and his victim : —“ Repent of your sins ; you must die !” Mary replied, in an agony of grief, “ Francois, don’t take away my life !—surely you would not kill me !—I will never again come to trouble you for money.” He, however, completed the bloody deed ; confessed it to Catherine, her mother, and sister ; and justified it on the ground of necessity, for had he not murdered her, she would have exposed him. At his trial, after denying it a hundred times, he admitted the fact, but, as an alleviating circumstance, said that before he committed the murder he gave her absolution. Do you think, O’Brien, that the sentence of absolution pronounced by this execrable miscreant was the same as if pronounced by the Judge himself ?

O’Brien. It is difficult to believe that.

Peter. Yes, O’Brien, it requires as much faith as would make an infidel, to believe that a

holy God, were he disposed to cede the power of absolution to any creature, would ever bestow such power upon such a wretch.

O'Brien. After all, I cannot help thinking that our Priests have power to forgive sin.

Peter. Pray, if they have this power, from whom do they derive it ?

O'Brien. They derive it from the Bishop.

Peter. And from whom does the Bishop derive it ?

O'Brien. He derives it from the Pope.

Peter. And from whom does the Pope derive it ?

O'Brien. He derives it from St. Peter.

Peter. And from whom did St. Peter derive it ?

O'Brien. It was bestowed upon him by Jesus Christ.

Peter. Will you have the goodness to tell me when it was bestowed, and in what part of the New Testament I may find an account of it ?

O'Brien. I don't know much of the Bible ; but my Priest, that I might be put upon my guard against heretics, told me that it is recorded in the 16th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, the 18th and 19th verses.

Peter. I have found the place. Suppose we read from the 13th verse : " When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that

I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Pray, what part of this passage gives Peter the power to forgive sin?

O'Brien. That which speaks of the keys, and of binding and loosing.

Peter. But how do you apply these expressions to the pardoning of a sinner?

O'Brien. Because, having the keys of the kingdom of heaven, he can let in, or keep out, whom he pleases.

Peter. What do you understand by the kingdom of heaven?

O'Brien. The future state of the righteous; or, in other words, eternal glory.

Peter. But that is rarely the sense in which our Lord uses the expression : why, therefore, should you suppose he uses it in that sense here ?

O'Brien. I was not aware that he ever used it in any other sense. Pray, in what other sense is the expression ever used ?

Peter. He generally uses it as signifying the state of the church of God, under his own reign, or what is usually called, the Christian dispensation. Hence such passages as, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ;" that is, the reign of Christ is at hand, probably alluding to Daniel's prophecy of the kingdom of heaven, under the type of a stone cut out of the mountain without hands. (Dan. ii. 34.) In one parable he likens the kingdom of heaven unto a man who sowed good seed in his field, in which, while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares ; to show that in the present state there will always be both good and bad men in the church. In a second parable he likens it to a grain of mustard-seed, sown in a field ; and in a third, to a little leaven hid in three measures of meal ; to show, by the fermentation of the latter, and the growth of the former, how his kingdom upon earth will increase. And in other parables he likens it to treasure hid in a field, and to goodly pearls ; to teach mankind

that it is of the highest value, and that to obtain it, we must be willing to part with every thing.

O'Brien. But if by the kingdom of heaven we are to understand the Christian church or dispensation, what are we to understand by the keys which were given to Peter?

Peter. The honour of opening the Christian dispensation, both to the Jews and the Gentiles: to the former, on the day of Pentecost, after Peter and the other Apostles had received the Holy Ghost at Jerusalem, when about three thousand repented and were baptized in the name of Jesus, and were added to the church: and to the latter, at Cæsarea, when Peter visited Cornelius, whose preaching was attested by the Holy Ghost; for “while Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” (Acts x. 44.) It was because Peter was to unlock the highest dispensation of mercy, that this figurative bequest was made to him. But in all this, there is not one word of Peter’s power to forgive sin.

O'Brien. But if it is not in the keys, what else can be meant by the power of binding or loosing, but the power to pardon, or not to pardon, sin?

Peter. You remind me of a gentleman who once warmly said, “Sir, if that estate does not belong to me, pray, to whom does it belong?”

To which it was replied, "Sir, suppose I should not happen to know to whom it belongs, it does not therefore follow that it belongs to you." So in the present instance, suppose I should not be able to show what else is meant by these expressions, it does not therefore follow that they mean the pardon of sin. If they relate at all to the pardon of sin, their meaning is obviously this, that Peter and the rest of the Apostles, (for the same power is given to them all in Matt. xviii. 18,) being under the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost, by their doctrine admitted none to the divine favour, nor excluded any from it, but such as God himself admitted or excluded; and that in all their decisions in the exercise of Christian discipline, they acted in such perfect conformity to the divine will, that whatever they did on earth was confirmed in heaven. But still here is not one word about Peter's power to forgive sin.

O'Brien. Well, your honour, I am utterly astonished. I was always instructed to believe that from this passage his power to forgive sin was as clear as demonstration itself; but now, to be ingenuous, I confess it does not appear to me to contain the semblance of a proof. But you said that something like this text is in Matthew xviii. 18. I wish you would read that place. Perhaps

that is the text the Priest mentioned to me, and not this.

Peter. The passage in Matthew xviii. 18, runs thus : " Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," &c. There is no difference between it and the passage you quoted from Matthew xvi., with this exception, that the one is spoken to St. Peter only, whereas the other is addressed to all the Apostles.

O'Brien. But is there not something said about St. Peter having power to forgive sin, in some other place ?

Peter. I suppose the passage of which you seem to have some confused recollection is John xx. 23 : " Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Is this what you were thinking of ?

O'Brien. Yes, the very text. Now the matter is decided.

Peter. Decided ! How is it decided ?

O'Brien. I mean this text clearly proves that the Apostles, and therefore Peter, who was one of them, had power to forgive sin.

Peter. Do you mean that they had an absolute or a declarative power ?

O'Brien. I don't exactly comprehend what you mean.

Peter. I shall endeavour to explain myself. By absolute power, I mean a power to say to a

poor guilty wretch, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and instantly to remove his condemnation: by declarative power, a power to say, from a perfect knowledge of the genuineness of the repentance and faith of a humble penitent,—from an absolute assurance that the terms on which God has offered his mercy, are in his case complied with,—"Thy sins are pardoned." In the former case pardon is the effect of the power; in the latter, the declaration is consequent on the pardon. The former is an exercise of mercy; whereas the latter is only a declaration of mercy already exercised. Now which of these did the Apostles possess?

O'Brien. I feel a little perplexed; but I have always been accustomed to think that they possessed what you call absolute power.

Peter. Do you think the Apostles did, or did *not*, employ those powers or gifts which God bestowed, in accomplishing the purposes for which they were given. For instance, he gave them power to preach the Gospel, power to work miracles, and power to exercise a wise and holy discipline in his church.

O'Brien. To suppose otherwise, would be to suppose that they were not only unprofitable, but, what is worse, unfaithful servants.

Peter. How then do you account for none of the Apostles ever in any one instance exercising the power of absolution? On supposition that

they had this power, they were, on your own principle, unfaithful men; for there is not a single instance on record of their ever absolving any one.

O'Brien. Sir, you surprise me. I have always thought that it was their every-day work, and on this account have thought the people very happy who lived in their day.

Peter. Instead of it being their every-day work, it was work that not one of them ever performed. On the contrary, they always directed men to Jesus Christ. So did Peter on the day of Pentecost; so did Paul in the case of the jailor; so did John to the church universal: "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." As it is the exclusive prerogative of the King to forgive rebels, so also it is God's exclusive prerogative to pardon sinners; a prerogative which had the Apostles possessed, they would unquestionably have exercised, as certainly as they exercised other powers which were given to them for the benefit of the church and the world. But their never having exercised it, when thousands and tens of thousands of opportunities for its exercise presented themselves, furnishes complete proof that they never possessed it.

O'Brien. Well, I confess it does appear strange, if they possessed the power, that they never exercised it. But are you sure they never exercised it?

Peter. As sure as that the Bible contains a faithful record of what they both said and did. They instructed mankind how to obtain pardon, propounded the terms on which that pardon might be obtained, and assured them that on compliance with those terms their sins should be remitted ; and probably, from their gift of discerning spirits, they might assure some doubting Christians, that, having complied with the requisitions of the Gospel, they were in the divine favour. But farther than this they could never go ; for none but God can absolutely forgive sin.

O'Brien. Sir, you alarm me ; for if what you say be true, I can have no confidence in the absolutions that I have received.

Peter. Confidence ! My dear Sir, it is a most horrible delusion which your Priests are practising upon your credulity,—a delusion which, there is reason to fear, has in millions of cases proved eternally fatal.

O'Brien. Well, one thing I think is quite clear, that if the Apostles had not power absolutely to forgive sin, their successors cannot have any such power.

Peter. Nothing is more ridiculous than to talk of successors of the Apostles. Sir, the Apostles as Apostles never had, nor could have, successors. The Apostles were witnesses of our Lord's resurrection ; but those who followed

them could not witness this fact. The Apostles were blessed with extraordinary gifts of healing and of tongues : which among those who call themselves their successors possess these ? On supposition, therefore, that the Apostles had possessed the power to forgive sin, it would no more follow that their successors possess the same power, than it would, that because the Apostles cast out devils, spake with tongues, took up serpents, and drank deadly things without being hurt, and laid their hands on sick people and healed them, therefore the present race of Priests can do the same. When, like the Apostles, they perform these things, you may listen to their pretensions to the power of absolution ; but till they give you evidence that they can do the less, never for a moment believe that they can do the greater, work. If they cannot remove a pimple, you may depend upon it they cannot cure the plague.

O'Brien. Then, Sir, what would you advise me to do ?

Peter. Follow the counsel which St. Paul gave to the Philippian jailer : " Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Trust in him, as the Ephesians did, (chap. i. 13,) and, like them, you shall obtain " redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin." To rely on your Priest, a poor sinner who needs mercy as much as any other wretch, is the ex-

treme of folly and madness. It is leaning on a broken reed, or rather on a pointed spear, which will pierce you to the heart. It is an opiate which sleeps the sinner to death, and plunges his wretched and deluded spirit into perdition. Absolved by the Priest, but condemned by God, he will to eternity execrate those deceivers and destroyers of the simple, whilst he shall eternalize this awful truth : " Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm."

DIALOGUE V.

ON THE ANTIQUITY, SUPREMACY, SUCCESSION,
UNITY, INFALLIBILITY, AND RULE OF FAITH,
OF THE PAPAL CHURCH.

Melancthon and O'Leary.

O'Leary. HAVE you heard the news, Melancthon?

Melancthon. What news, O'Leary?

O'Leary. Why, that which at present rings through all Ireland, that Lords and gentlemen, and Church Parsons, and Presbyterians, and Swadlers, with other heretics, have established what they call Reformation Meetings, for the purpose of overturning the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church.

Melancthon. I hope, O'Leary, for the honour of our country, that the report is false, and that we have neither Lords nor Parsons so bad among us, as to attempt to do so wicked a thing.

O'Leary. But indeed it is too true.

Melancthon. How do you know it to be true? Have you attended any of those meetings? Or from whom have you obtained your information?

O'Leary. I attended! No, indeed, not I; I would rather live upon fish and potatoes from Shrove-Tuesday till Easter-Sunday, than be found in such company, for such a purpose. I received my information from Father O'Flaherty, a man of strict veracity, and on whom I can therefore confidently rely.

Melancthon. I suspect there is some mistake in the case. Did not the Father say, that their object was to overturn the Roman Catholic Church?

O'Leary. Indeed I believe he did say so: but that, you know, is the same as if he had said, the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church.

Melancthon. Not exactly so: in some particulars they agree, but in many others they do not. Take the *holy* Catholic Church, and the *Roman* Catholic Church, and compare them, and you will find little more resemblance between them, than between a cage of unclean birds, and a royal palace.

O'Leary. Sir, I maintain that there is no difference; and that there is no other church on earth, but the Roman Catholic Church; and that all who are not within her pale, are under

God's curse, and, if they die in their heresy, will infallibly be damned.

Melancthon. Gently, O'Leary; don't breathe threatenings and slaughter against your Protestant neighbours. You know, O'Leary, many of them joined in petitioning Parliament for your emancipation.

O'Leary. I know they did, and I thank them for it. I would give the devil his due; but for all that, he is still the devil; and, by holy St. Dunstan, if I had it in my power, I would serve every heretic in the world as that blessed saint served the adversary, when he attacked his chastity. I would take them by the nose with a pair of red hot pincers.

Melancthon. That would be hot work, O'Leary. I perceive you are of the true Roman Catholic breed, and of the most ancient religion in the world.

O'Leary. Yes, your honour, I am indeed. All other religions are mere mushroom religions; but ours is the majestic oak, which has flourished from the beginning.

Melancthon. The great ANTIQUITY of your religion, O'Leary, cannot be denied.

O'Leary. Your honour rejoiceth my very soul. I consider this admission to be a great step towards your honour's conversion to the true faith. Your honour is a learned gentleman; and therefore you will not deny that our

religion is as old as St. Peter, the prince of the Apostles.

Melancthon. As old as St. Peter, O'Leary ! That is nothing to the age of your Church. It is as old as Herod, it is as old as Nebuchadnezzar, it is as old as Moloch, it is as old as Cain, it is as old as *him* who is said to have been "a murderer from the beginning ;" for your Church, O'Leary, has dealt in human butchery, and defiled every country with human blood, wherever she has been established. O ! how unlike Christ, whose church the Papal Church professes to be ! He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

O'Leary. Well, but other churches have persecuted as well as the Catholic.

Melancthon. I admit they have, O'Leary ; but whenever they have done so, they have acted in direct opposition to the leading principle of Protestantism, — *the right of private judgment* ; whereas when your Church persecutes, she acts in accordance with her principles, and under the direct sanction of the decisions and decrees of many of her Councils. To murder heretics is in your Church a meritorious act.

O'Leary. Waving any further observations on this point, I wish to know whether the Catholic Church contains any thing else that is of greater antiquity than St. Peter ?

Melancthon. Yes, O'Leary, it does. The worship of angels and departed spirits, and idols, whether of gold, silver, wood, or stone, is a great deal older than St. Peter,—yea, older than Abraham, the father of the faithful. But when I say such worship is older than St. Peter, I do not mean it has been practised by the Christian church ever since his day : on the contrary, it did not find its way into any part of the Christian church till many centuries after the death of the Apostle, as I have fully shown; O'Leary, in my dialogue on angel, saint, and image worship, to which I refer you.

O'Leary. Do I understand your honour right, when I suppose your honour to say, that the thing existed in the world long before St. Peter's day, but that it did not find its way into the Catholic Church till long after that time ?

Melancthon. You do, O'Leary : that is precisely what I mean.

O'Leary. But if so, then there are some things in the Catholic Church which were not in the apostolic church, nor at all known in the Christian church till hundreds of years after apostolic times.

Melancthon. Yes, O'Leary, many things : every thing which distinguishes Popery from Protestantism, is of this character. Purgatory, transubstantiation, penances, pilgrimages, priest-

ly confessions and absolutions, supremacy, angel, saint, and image worship, prayers in an unknown tongue, the withholding of wine from the laity in the sacrament, with all the other farrago of Popery, are, when compared with the antiquity of the Christian church, mere novelties.

O'Leary. At any rate, if my religion be not as old as St. Peter, it is at least a great deal older than yours, which sprang from Luther.

Melancthon. No, no; in this you are incorrect, O'Leary: our religion did not spring from Luther. He was one of its Ministers; but its Founder was Jesus Christ, and it had existed one thousand five hundred years before Luther was born.

O'Leary. Existed one thousand five hundred years! why, your honour surely cannot be serious. If your honour will not be offended, I should like to ask your honour one question.

Melancthon. Offended, O'Leary! not I; you are perfectly at liberty to ask as many questions as you please.

O'Leary. The question I would submit to your honour is this,—If, as you say, your religion has existed so long, pray where did it exist before the time of Luther?

Melancthon. You remind me of an anecdote. In the time of King James the Second, of true Popish memory, a coffee-house was set up near

Temple-bar, by a number of Popish Priests, who held public debates upon religion. One of them generally took the Protestant side, that he might defend it *weakly*, and at last seem to give it up as indefensible. It happened one evening that they were debating on the antiquity of the Church, and the question was put, "Where was the Protestant religion before Luther, or before the Reformation?" As any person was allowed to be present at these disputes, a shoemaker's apprentice had stepped in to listen. At length, thinking that he could speak better upon the subject than the pretended Protestant, he asked whether he might have liberty to speak. They very courteously answered that he might. "Well then," said the lad, "I have but little to say, but I insist upon two things: first, that my opponent shall freely answer any question I put to him; and, secondly, that he shall not be angry at what I ask him." These preliminaries being agreed to, the boy said, with a significant look, to an old Jesuit, "Pray, Sir, when did you wash your face?" "What is that to you, you foolish boy?" "Nay, Sir, you promised not to be angry." "Why, true, I did. Well, child, I washed my face this morning." "And pray, Sir, where was your face before you washed it?" "Where? why, just where it is now. Where dost thou think it was?" "Ay, Sir," said the boy, "that is the case. Christianity

was always the same ; but your Church sullied and dirtied it for many years in a most beastly manner. At the Reformation it was washed clean again, and it is now where it was at first, —*in the Bible !*”

The boy, O'Leary, was right. The religion of Protestants is the New Testament, and is as old as the Apostles ; whereas, the religion of the Romish Church has its date from the commencement of its apostacy from the truth as it is in Jesus. What is new in religion must be false ; but the distinguishing doctrines of Popery are new, for they are not in the Bible ; therefore Popery is false.

O'Leary. What, then, does your honour mean to deny that the Romish Church is the oldest Christian church in the world ?

Melancthon. I do indeed, O'Leary. As she now exists she can scarcely be called Christian at all, having for many ages been awfully paganized and idolatrous. It is indeed true that she retains some of the ancient creeds of the Christian church,—just as the Jews during the period of their idolatrous apostacy retained in their Scriptures the laws of Moses, —but these are buried under a mountain of rubbish ; and the truths which they contain are neutralized by her gross idolatries, and ridiculous and most contemptible superstitions. The Papal Church, as she now exists, is not

so old as Christianity, by more than a thousand years.

O'Leary. Well, but was not St. Peter Bishop of the Catholic Church at Rome?

Melancthon. I believe not, O'Leary. So far from his having been Bishop of that Church, there is no satisfactory historical proof that he ever was at Rome at all.

O'Leary. Not at Rome, your honour? What! did you never hear of his contest with Simon Magus in that city, and of his being crucified there during Nero's persecution?

Melancthon. Yes, O'Leary, I have heard of his shooting the magician when he was flying, and bringing him down to the earth; and also of the Apostle being crucified with his head downward. But the former story I reject as fabulous, and the latter as unsupported by sufficient evidence. Eusebius omits the fable altogether; and mentions the place and manner of St. Peter's death rather as a probable tradition than as an undoubted fact. Besides, what appears to me to be strong presumptive evidence that St. Peter never was at Rome, is, that neither he nor St. Paul so much as once mention the fact. Peter wrote his last Epistle a little before his death, which took place in the year 67; but in this there is no allusion to his being in Rome: and his first Epistle was written from Babylon, not from Rome. St. Paul wrote se-

veral Epistles from Rome: in the year 57, to the Philippians, to Philemon, to the Ephesians, and to the Colossians; and his Second Epistle to Timothy in 68; but in not one of these Epistles is St. Peter so much as once named. Is it probable, think you, O'Leary, that St. Paul, who mentions the names of many other brethren, would have omitted the name of Peter, had he been there?

O'Leary. I confess, your honour, I think he would have been mentioned first.

Melancthon. But if St. Peter was never Bishop of Rome, then what becomes of the authority and infallibility of your Popes, who pretend to derive both from his having first sat in the Roman Papal chair? If he was never Bishop of Rome, they, poor sinners, are not his successors; and, however infallible he might be, and whatever power he might possess to transmit his authority and infallibility to those who should succeed him, they can have no share in it, for they are not his legal heirs: they are bastards, and not sons.

O'Leary. I don't know how to refute your honour, for which I am really sorry; for if what you say be correct, we are all wrong. Destroy the succession, and all is over. Ordinations, sacraments, and absolutions are all invalid and worthless.

Melancthon. Yes, O'Leary, if these derive

their virtue and efficacy from Popes being the successors of St. Peter, they are not worth a fig: and the money you have paid your Priests for praying your grandmother out of purgatory, and for granting you absolution for getting drunk, and swearing, and the other bad things that you have done, which I forbear to name, is all thrown away. Alas! O'Leary, you have fallen among thieves, who have sadly plundered you.

O'Leary. But suppose, your honour, that St. Peter had been Bishop of Rome, in that case you would not deny the supremacy, and succession, and infallibility, of the Roman Catholic Church?

Melancthon. Yes, O'Leary, I would deny them all.

O'Leary. Why, surely you don't deny that St. Peter was the prince of the Apostles, and that they were all subject to him?

Melancthon. Indeed I do, for which I shall assign my reasons; but as you seem to think he was SUPREME, I should like to know *your* reason for that opinion.

O'Leary. My reason, your honour, is this,—the Priest says he is, and that an Evangelist has asserted the fact.

Melancthon. Which Evangelist, and where?

O'Leary. The Evangelist St. Matthew, in chap. xvi. 18.

Melancthon. Is that the only reason you have for believing in St. Peter's supremacy, O'Leary?

O'Leary. I don't know any other.

Melancthon. Will you be kind enough to unfold your reason? for I don't at present understand how you can prove it from that text.

O'Leary. The doctrine is proved from the name which is given to Peter, *Cephas*, which signifies "a head." Hence, in a very learned work, entitled "Mercy and Truth; or, Charity maintained by Roman Catholics," by Edward Knott, a Jesuit, we have the following words:—"In the city of Rome there was first an episcopal chair placed for Peter, wherein Peter, the head of the Apostles, sat, whereof also he was called Cephas."

Melancthon. And so all the foundation you have for your opinion, is the criticism of a Jesuit on the word Cephas. Alas! for the edifice which is built on such a foundation! He appears to have thought the word derived from κεφαλή, signifying "a head;" whereas, it is a Syriac word, and signifies "a stone."* I have never doubted that many of the heads of your Church have been wooden heads; but it seems I have been under a mistake, for they were made of stone, and not of wood.

* Chillingworth's Works, fol. ed., p. 231.

O'Leary. Well, but as you think my reason for Peter's supremacy to be of little value, pray will your honour have the goodness to let me hear your reasons for rejecting it? Perhaps they are no better.

Melancthon. If not, O'Leary, then I hope you will treat them with supreme contempt. My reasons are the following:—First, Peter never affected superiority over any of the other Apostles. Secondly, Not one of the Apostles, either directly or indirectly acknowledged Peter to be their head. Thirdly, Long after Christ gave the name of Cephas to Peter, there was a contention in his presence, among the Apostles, who should be greatest, when our Lord, instead of saying, (which he certainly would, had the fact been so,) “Peter is the greatest, for I have made him your head,”—said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them,—but ye shall not be so;” (Luke xxii. 24—26;) and in another place, “One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.” (Matt. xxiii. 8.) Fourthly, In the council which was held at Jerusalem, an account of which you may read at your leisure, in Acts xv., though Peter was present and spoke in that council, James, and not Peter, presided; which is evident from these words: “*My sentence is,*” &c. He, as the Chairman or President, pronounced the judgment of the court; which most assuredly he

would not have done, had Peter been the supreme head. Fifthly, St. Paul, who uniformly taught obedience to rulers, withstood Peter to the face at Antioch, (Gal. ii. 11,)—a thing utterly incredible, on the supposition that Peter was the supreme head. Sixthly, St. Paul explicitly denies Peter's superiority, when he says, "I was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles." (2 Cor. xi. 5.)

O'Leary. I confess your reasons appear much better than mine, and exceedingly plausible. Yet one thing very much puzzles me, which I shall thank your honour to explain. If the Roman Catholic Church be not the most ancient, and if Peter be not the supreme head, and if the Pope be not his successor, how comes it to pass, that from the beginning, all churches, till the time of Luther, were subject to the Bishop of Rome?

Melancthon. It was not till the seventh century that the supremacy of the Church at Rome was admitted, which was accomplished at the desire of Pope Boniface III., by the infamous Phocas, "that abominable tyrant, who waded to the imperial throne through the blood of the Emperor Mauritius."* For a long period previous to this, the title of "Universal Bishop" had been assumed by the Bishops of Constantinople, which indeed was never very palatable

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, 4to, vol i., p. 320.

to the Bishops of Rome. But when, in the year 588, John, Bishop of Constantinople, assembled by his own authority a Council at Constantinople, to inquire into an accusation brought against Peter, the Patriarch of Antioch, and publicly avowed himself œcumenical or universal Bishop; Gregory I., Bishop of Rome, became indignant at his arrogance, and, dreading the effects of such supremacy, opposed his claim in the most vigorous manner in letters addressed to the Emperor, and to such persons as he judged proper to second his opposition. But all his efforts were without effect; and the Bishops of Constantinople continued to assume the title in question.* So that, instead of all churches being subject to the Bishop of Rome till the time of Luther, the supreme authority of the Roman Church was not established till the reign of the infamous Phocas; and the assertion of this supremacy in a short time led to a division between the Eastern and Western Churches, the latter becoming subject to the See of Rome, whilst the former indignantly rejected her dominion, and have uniformly despised her authority.

O'Leary. After all, your honour admits that there has been a Church in Rome from apostolic times; and though I confess that I am not sufficiently learned to confute the arguments by

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, 4to, vol. i., pp. 288, 289.

which you have endeavoured to show that Peter never was Bishop of Rome, yet I am willing to hope, after all you have said, that he was its first Bishop; and if so, there having been a regular chain of successors, from that time to the present, all ordinations, and sacraments, and absolutions, are valid; and therefore, being a member of the Catholic Church, I am safe.

Melancthon. What do you mean by “a regular chain of successors,” O’Leary?

O’Leary. Successors of the Apostle Peter.

Melancthon. Do you mean that they succeeded him in the office of Apostle?

O’Leary. No, I think I never heard my Priest, who is a very learned man, call them Apostles, but only the successors of the Apostles.

Melancthon. But is not this the same thing as calling them Apostles? Suppose I were to say that George the Fourth is the successor of King George the Third, in what sense would you understand me?

O’Leary. Of course, your honour, I should understand you to say, that George the Fourth succeeded to the throne of George the Third, and like him exercised every regal office.

Melancthon. Do you think then, O’Leary, that the Popes possess all apostolic gifts, and exercise all apostolic functions?

O’Leary. I confess I feel myself at a loss to answer the question.

Melancthon. I shall endeavour to assist you. The Apostles, you know, were blessed with the gift of tongues : have the Popes all possessed this gift?

O'Leary. I don't believe they have.

Melancthon. The Apostles could miraculously cure diseases, as Peter healed the lame man who begged alms of him at the beautiful gate of the temple ; they could kill with a word, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira ; and they could raise to life, as in the case of Dorcas. Have your Popes been blessed with such gifts ?

O'Leary. To confess the truth, I don't believe a man of them could ever perform any one of such miracles.

Melancthon. The Apostles could discern spirits, as in the case of Simon Magus : do your Popes possess this gift ?

O'Leary. I don't believe they do.

Melancthon. The Apostles had seen Jesus Christ, and were the witnesses of his death and resurrection. Have your Popes ever seen Christ, or have they been the personal witnesses of his death or resurrection ?

O'Leary. Certainly not, your honour. But if all this be necessary to constitute an Apostle, then St. Paul was not an Apostle ; for he never saw Christ, nor was he a witness either of his death or resurrection.

Melancthon. Where did St. Paul reside, O'Leary ?

O'Leary. He appears to have been a native of Tarsus, but to have resided at Jerusalem; for he was educated by Gamaliel, a Jewish Doctor, in that city.

Melancthon. When did St. Paul live?

O'Leary. He was a young man when Stephen was stoned, and active in that persecution.

Melancthon. Was the martyrdom of Stephen long after the crucifixion of Christ?

O'Leary. No, a very short time.

Melancthon. Do you think it at all credible, that a young man of St. Paul's ardent mind, and zeal for the Jewish Church, could live in Jerusalem, during the trial and crucifixion of Christ, without witnessing it?

O'Leary. I confess it is not credible.

Melancthon. And as he witnessed his death, so also he witnessed his resurrection in the personal manifestation of himself to him, to which he distinctly refers in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, xv. 8. He also positively declares that he received the Gospel immediately from Christ: "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. i. 11, 12.) So you perceive, O'Leary, that though St. Paul was, as he expresses it, like "one born out of due time," yet he possessed the same privileges and qualifica-

tions that were enjoyed by the elder Apostles.

O'Leary. I am convinced that St. Paul saw Christ after his resurrection; that he was miraculously taught by Christ; and that there is moral certainty of his having witnessed his death.

Melancthon. The Apostles, O'Leary, were all holy men,—not officially, but personally holy, enjoying deep and intimate communion with God; instant in season and out of season, in warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom; not “counting their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.” Have the Popes been thus holy?

O'Leary. I am afraid not.

Melancthon. Then it seems, that neither as it respects ordinary grace, nor extraordinary gifts, do they at all resemble the Apostles. In what then are they St. Peter's successors?

O'Leary. They are his successors in office.

Melancthon. But this I have proved to be impossible; for the office of an Apostle requires both spiritual and supernatural qualifications, which you admit they do not possess.

O'Leary. O! I suppose they are successors of his office as a Bishop, and not as an Apostle.

Melancthon. Do you think, then, that any of the Apostles were Bishops? Are you not aware that the apostolic and the episcopal offices are distinct? that whilst the office of Apostle is the highest among the extraordinary, that of Bishop or Pastor is only the highest of the ordinary, offices of the Christian church? There is not so great a difference between a Commander-in-Chief and an Ensign, as between the office of an Apostle, and of a Pastor or Bishop. Suppose any one were to inform you that the late Duke of York, when Commander-in-Chief, was also an Ensign in the 8th regiment of foot, would you believe him? .

O'Leary. Most certainly I should not, without evidence.

Melancthon. Why not?

O'Leary. Because there is such a disparity between them.

Melancthon. Just so; and for the same reason I will never believe that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, or of any other place, without evidence. But for argument's sake, I will allow him to have been Bishop of Rome; and what then?

O'Leary. Why, then it will most certainly follow, that Roman Catholic Bishops are true Bishops, and that the Catholic Church is the true Church.

Melancthon. Are you quite satisfied with this conclusion, O'Leary?

O'Leary. Indeed, your honour, I am.

Melancthon. We will examine it, O'Leary ; and I despair not of convincing you that there is nothing in the notion but rank absurdity. What is the office of a Bishop, O'Leary ?

O'Leary. I understand it is to watch over and feed the flock.

Melancthon. You are right O'Leary. Does the office of a Bishop require any moral or spiritual qualifications ?

O'Leary. I have heard that it does, but what they are I don't remember : perhaps your honour can inform me.

Melancthon. Yes, O'Leary, St. Paul very explicitly states those qualifications in his first epistle to Timothy, chapter iii. : " A Bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach ; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre ; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous ; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." Such are the qualifications which the Apostle says he *must* have. Do you think that the Popes who have sat in Peter's chair, as you call it, have all possessed these qualifications ?

O'Leary. I fear not all, your honour.

Melancthon. No indeed, O'Leary ; many of them have been the most depraved and abandoned of the human race. Platina, a Popish

writer, and who was the Pope's librarian, says that "all the Popes, from Silvester the Second to Gregory the Seventh, inclusive, which were about eighteen Popes, were magicians." Some Popes have been atheists, and others have lived in the daily commission of crimes which cannot be named. You will admit that these had not the moral qualifications which St. Paul says a Bishop must have.

O'Leary. That I am obliged to admit; but then I have been informed that the efficacy of the various sacraments of our Church depends not so much on personal, as on official, holiness: and that in virtue of a regular unbroken chain of succession, the grace which is necessary for the salvation of the Church, has run through all the Bishops, and from Bishop to Bishop, from the time of Peter to this day; and that though the conduit-pipes have not always been so clean as was to be desired, yet the precious liquor has received no taint, nor has it lost any of its saving qualities.

Melancthon. What do you mean by *official* holiness?

O'Leary. I mean that holiness which belongs to office.

Melancthon. Is office a person, or a thing?

O'Leary. Not a person, of course, but a thing, to which belong certain duties and dignities.

Melancthon. Suppose, O'Leary, the duties to

be neglected ; would there, in that case, be any blame incurred ? and if so, would any punishment be inflicted ?

O'Leary. I suppose both.

Melancthon. But whom would you blame or punish ?

O'Leary. The man, whether Bishop or Priest, who was guilty of such neglect.

Melancthon. But that would be punishing the innocent for the guilty, O'Leary : you should punish the thing, and not the man ; the man has nothing to do with it. The holiness, you say, is not at all personal, but wholly official ; and if so, the sin is official also, and not personal.

O'Leary. Your honour does not appear to understand what I mean by official holiness.

Melancthon. Perhaps, O'Leary, there is no difficulty in accounting for this, for, as the poet has it,

“ Nonsense is never to be understood ; ”

and I confess that to talk of holiness being inherent in office, and utterly independent of the character of the individual who sustains it, is an abstraction far too metaphysically sublime for my comprehension.

O'Leary. All I mean, your honour, is, if any man be consecrated a Bishop or a Priest, whether a good or a bad man, in virtue of that consecration all his ministrations will be valid and efficient.

Melancthon. Now I understand what you mean. Will you, O'Leary, favour me with the reasons upon which that opinion is founded? But first inform me what you mean by consecration, and what by valid and efficient ministrations.

O'Leary. By consecration, I mean being set apart to the office of a Bishop, by the laying on of holy hands, and by the accompanying rites of the Church: and by valid ministrations, I mean, that in virtue of consecration, the individual is possessed of the power to save children by baptism; to convert bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; to grant absolution to offenders; and to pray souls out of purgatory; with many other things too tedious to enumerate.

Melancthon. And all this, independent of personal holiness?

O'Leary. Yes, your honour.

Melancthon. Suppose he be an infidel, or even an atheist?

O'Leary. Yes.

Melancthon. Or a debauchee of the vilest and basest description, and habitually guilty of vices too beastly to be named?

O'Leary. Yes.

Melancthon. Or a magician? or, were such a thing possible, an incarnation of the devil?

O'Leary. Yes, your honour, it would not at all affect the validity and efficiency of any of his ministerial acts.

Melancthon. Who told you, O'Leary, that consecration possesses all these wonder-working virtues?

O'Leary. The good Father O'Flaherty.

Melancthon. And did he tell you on what authority he gave you the information?

O'Leary. O yes; on the authority of the Catholic Church, which has always believed and taught these wonderful things.

Melancthon. And on what authority does the Church teach all this?

O'Leary. On the authority of the New Testament: so the good Father asserted, and said it was given to Peter in John xiv. 15, 16: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, to remain with you for ever." I hope your honour, who professes great reverence for what the Bible says, will not deny that this proves the point beyond the possibility of contradiction.

Melancthon. Have you quoted all that our Lord has said in that place? There is such a thing, you know, O'Leary, as a lie by omission. Suppose I were to quote David, as saying, "There is no God," a stranger to David would think him an atheist; but were I to quote the whole of David's words,—“The fool hath said

in his heart, There is no God,"—the stranger would at once perceive that the atheist was the fool, and not David. Now, perhaps our Lord may have connected these words with some others, which may render their application to your notion of successional official holiness utterly absurd and impossible. Can you repeat the words immediately preceding and following?

O'Leary. No, your honour, I cannot; for I never read the words myself: but as Father O'Flaherty is a very good and learned Priest, I did not doubt but he repeated all that our Lord had said upon the subject.

Melancthon. Your good and learned Priest, O'Leary, is wise in his generation. He calculated on his hearer's ignorance of the Bible, (which the Priests of your Church know they may generally do with great safety,) and repeated the middle member of the sentence, omitting the first and third altogether. Shall I read you the whole passage, O'Leary?

O'Leary. Your honour will much oblige me by so doing. But I shall be additionally obliged if you will read it out of the Catholic Testament.

Melancthon. You shall be indulged, O'Leary; for I have the Rhemish version, which was printed at Antwerp, by James Seldenstach, in 1621, now before me. The words are these: "If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I

will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but you know him." Whatever may be the exact import of the promise, you see that it is limited to persons who know, love, and obey Christ; and is not made either to atheists, or debauchees, or magicians, or incarnations of the devil. Have all your Popes, O'Leary, known, loved, and obeyed the Saviour?

O'Leary. No, your honour: many of them, it is admitted, have been very wicked men.

Melancthon. If so, the promise having been made to good men only, it could have no relation to wicked Popes. Besides, according to our Lord, the world (and all wicked men, whether Popes or others, are so denominated) cannot receive this Paraclete, this Spirit of truth. Does it not then plainly follow, O'Leary, that, supposing there be any truth in your notion of successional virtue, that virtue must end at the first wicked Pope? And, as a consequence which cannot be parried, all subsequent ministrations must have been invalid and inefficient.

O'Leary. Your honour greatly perplexes and alarms me. I do distinctly perceive that the promise is perfectly conditional, and that nei-

ther Popes nor Priests, if wicked men, could possibly be the subjects of its fulfilment. I perceive, too, with an equal degree of clearness, that the holiness is not official, as I had been taught to think it, but that it is personal. But I feel alarmed for my own safety; for I have always built my hopes of salvation upon the validity of the ministerial acts of the Catholic Priesthood, which validity I was instructed to believe was entirely derived from apostolical succession. But you have convinced me that this succession, if it exist any where, cannot possibly exist in the Roman Catholic Church, because many of its Popes, and multitudes of its Priests, have been notoriously wicked men.

Melancthon. If your salvation, O'Leary, depended upon the truth of the absurd and ridiculous doctrine of Papal succession, your condition would be dreadful beyond expression. But though there is no more truth in this, than in the other dogmas of Popery, you need not despair of salvation. I sincerely congratulate you on your deliverance from error: this is one step towards your receiving "the Spirit of truth."

O'Leary. Can your honour inform me what Church possesses the true succession?

Melancthon. I don't clearly understand your question, O'Leary: I shall thank you to explain.

O'Leary. I mean, what Church has had an uninterrupted succession of good Bishops, from the time of St. Peter?

Melancthon. None at all, O'Leary. No man who possesses the least acquaintance with ecclesiastical history will for a moment question the correctness of this answer. But why trace the succession to Peter, rather than to any other of the Apostles? The promise of the abiding of the Spirit of truth was made as much to the other Apostles as to Peter. And another promise on which your Priests attempt to establish the doctrine of succession, which you may read in Matt. xxviii. 20,—“Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,”—is also made to all the Apostles. But though these and similar promises are recorded in the New Testament, yet there has not been a single race of pious Bishops, in regular uninterrupted succession, from any one of the Apostles.

O'Leary. Then has there been any period since the time of the Apostles, when there were no Christians, and Christian Ministers, and Christian ordinances in the world?

Melancthon. No, O'Leary: ever since Christianity was introduced, Christ has had a Church, and an efficient Christian ministry, in the world.

O'Leary. What, though not in succession from the Apostles?

Melancthon. Yes, though neither lineally nor episcopally descended from them.

O'Leary. But without a regular succession, there could be no ordination; and without ordination, no ministry.

Melancthon. Who ordained the Apostles, O'Leary?

O'Leary. Jesus Christ.

Melancthon. Was their ministry efficient?

O'Leary. Beyond all question, it was.

Melancthon. How did he ordain them? By imposition of hands?

O'Leary. I understand he simply called or appointed them to their office.

Melancthon. You are right, O'Leary. Then the imposition of hands is not necessary to render a ministry valid?

O'Leary. I confess it does not seem necessary.

Melancthon. Is Jesus Christ still the head of the Church?

O'Leary. Unquestionably he is.

Melancthon. Has he as much power to call or appoint Ministers now as formerly?

O'Leary. No doubt he has. But though he has it, he does not exercise it. He has committed the calling and appointment of Ministers to the officers, for the time being, of his Church.

Melancthon. Suppose those officers neither to

know, love, or obey the Saviour ; in that case, will Christ (who, we have already seen, will not abide with such) commit the appointment of his Ministers to such persons ? It would not be half so absurd to suppose that His Majesty would appoint a traitor to be Premier, or a violent Papist to be Archbishop of Canterbury.

O'Leary. Well, but are not Ministers made by Ministers ?

Melancthon. No doubt, O'Leary, there are many such ; but Ministers who have no higher origin are not, whatever they may be called, Christ's Ministers : they are of the earth, earthy. To all such he saith, " What hast thou to do to declare my statutes ? " (Psalm l. 16.) Christ's Ministers are appointed by himself ; and he previously qualifies them for the work of the ministry, by renewing their hearts, and making them Christians ; by instructing their understandings, and thus furnishing them with correct knowledge of the facts, and doctrines, and precepts, and promises of the Gospel ; and by giving them such a readiness of utterance, as will make them apt to teach and wise to win souls. These qualifications, O'Leary, come neither of consecration, nor of ordination ; which is evident from the multitudes who have been both ordained and consecrated, and yet were totally destitute of them. What the Evangelist John says of Christian believers may be affirmed of

Christian Ministers: They are “born not of blood, nor by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of the man, but of God.”

O'Leary. Then your honour does not think that men are made Ministers in virtue of a stream which sprang out of Peter, as the waters did from Horeb, and which has run through all Popes, and Bishops, and Priests, from that day to this?

Melancthon. No indeed, O'Leary, I do not. Such a stream as that you speak of never existed: and if it had, the countries through which it had to pass are so mountainous,—the vices of Popes, Bishops, and Priests being perfectly Alpine and Appennine,—that it would have been entirely stopped in its course more than a thousand years ago. Your notion of a ministry by succession is not less absurd, than the idea that men are poets, philosophers, or mathematicians by succession. What would you think, O'Leary, were you to hear any one gravely assert that Milton was no poet, unless his regular succession from Homer could be proved? that Boyle was no philosopher, unless his regular descent from Socrates could be demonstrated? that Sir Isaac Newton was no mathematician, unless every link in the chain between him and Archimedes was perfectly whole? or that Locke was no logician, unless the uninterrupted succession between him and Aristotle could be distinctly established?

O'Leary. I should think his assertions perfectly ridiculous!

Melancthon. But why?

O'Leary. Because genius and talent know no such succession; they are not at all hereditary, but are found to spring up often in persons and places entirely unlooked for.

Melancthon. You mean that talent and genius come from God, who is the Author and Giver of every good and perfect gift.

O'Leary. I do, your honour.

Melancthon. And to the same source, *O'Leary*, must be traced all those gifts and graces which are essential to the Christian ministry. They are not transmitted to us by any creaturely succession, but descend from above. Christ calls whomsoever he will to minister the word of truth; and whom he calls he qualifies for, and disposes to, that ministry.

O'Leary. But if there be no regular succession, do not all ministerial acts lose their validity?

Melancthon. What do you mean, *O'Leary*, by the validity of ministerial acts?

O'Leary. Take, for instance, the sacrifice of the mass, or absolution; and what I mean to ask is this,—Without an uninterrupted succession from Peter, can any Priest convert the wafer into the real body of Christ, or absolve the sinner from his sins?

Melancthon. Yes, as well as if the chain had never been broken, or the stream had never been interrupted in its progress. I mean, O'Leary, that succession or no succession on these subjects makes no difference; for such conversion of the wafer never took place, nor did any Priest or Apostle ever possess the power of absolving from or pardoning sin, as you may see abundantly proved in my Dialogues on Transubstantiation, Confession, and Absolution. Salvation is not at all necessarily connected with any ministerial act, whether that be the preaching of the Gospel, or the ministration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, (there are no other,) but depends upon the moral state of the individual who is the subject of these ministerial acts: if he be willing to be saved, the Gospel and its ordinances will prove to him means of salvation; but if he be impenitent, and obstinately refuse to be saved, the Gospel and its ordinances will prove to him the savour of death to death. A thousand of your wafer gods, O'Leary, will produce no change either in his character or state. To effect this, divine influence is absolutely necessary: without this, the ministrations of Apostles themselves were inefficient; hence St. Paul says, "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 7.)

O'Leary. Then, if I understand your honour rightly, our salvation does not depend upon apostolical succession, nor on any outward ministerial act whatever, but on the good pleasure of God, which, in matters of salvation, is contingent on our compliance or non-compliance with the terms of the Gospel?

Melancthon. That is precisely what I mean. Instead of seeking salvation through a chain which reaches from St. Peter to the present day, many of the links of which have been broken, you must obtain it directly from above,—from Him in whom are all our springs. I say salvation, O'Leary; by which I mean, not priestly absolution, but divine forgiveness and regeneration; the remission of all past sins, accompanied with the peace which passeth all understanding; and regeneration,—a renewed heart, manifested by a renunciation of all sin, victory over the world, and humble obedience to the commands of Christ.

O'Leary. I thought, your honour, that without any such change, yea, though we even got drunk, and cursed, and swore, if we were members of the Catholic Church, and only performed the penances enjoined by our Priests, we were quite safe.

Melancthon. Alas! O'Leary, I fear the great majority of your Priests have taught you to rely entirely on these broken reeds, which to

myriads will, in the end, prove pointed spears. The day of judgment, O'Leary, will be a dreadful day to those deceivers and destroyers of the souls of men. The nonsense they have told you about succession, has misled you.

O'Leary. But, your honour, they shall mislead me no more on this point; for you have fully convinced me, not only that there is no proof that Peter ever was at Rome; and, supposing he had been, that there has been no succession of pious Bishops in that Church; (and the Spirit of Truth is promised to none else;) but also that the Scriptures teach nothing like the doctrine of succession, which I had been accustomed to receive.

Melancthon. I rejoice, O'Leary, in your deliverance from error. Let this fact be deeply impressed upon your mind,—that grace, and all ministerial gifts, come immediately from above, and are not derived hereditarily from any of our predecessors. The nonsense which your Priests talk about uninterrupted succession seldom fails to amuse me, and has not unfrequently reminded me of an article published in a Connaught newspaper, nearly thirty years ago, about an ass. The article referred to, after describing the animal's height, and many of the excellent properties which it possessed, proceeded to recount its pedigree: its ancestors, both in the male and female line, were eminently illus-

trious, their descent being traceable, not through a few generations or centuries only, but in a regular chain of succession from their great progenitors in Noah's ark. Yet after all, O'Leary, it was only an ass.

O'Leary. I suppose you mean to say, that however illustrious some Bishops and Priests in the Romish Church might be, the present race are but ——

Melancthon. Don't say asses, O'Leary! All I mean to say is, that though Peter and Paul were Apostles, your Priests bear no more resemblance to them, than an idiot does to a philosopher.

O'Leary. Well, your honour, I give up succession as a mere Popish fiction, which is big with absurdity, and therefore utterly indefensible.

Melancthon. After all, O'Leary, were there any truth in the occult virtues of succession, Protestant Ministers enjoy as great a share in them as any of your Priests. Luther, and the many other Priests who afterwards became Protestants, possessed all those virtues, and, of course, the power of transmitting them to their successors in the ministry; and their successors possess precisely the same powers and virtues to the present day. It is true that the precious liquor at the Reformation diverged from the main pipe, as our gas does, when our streets are

to be lighted ; yet as the gas in the latter is of the same quality, and the lights as brilliant, as in the main or principal street, so this ecclesiastical gas is quite as good in the Protestant as in the Popish streets. But all Protestants, O'Leary, with the exception of a few half Papists among them, reject the notion of succession as one of the progeny of Antichrist.

O'Leary. Your honour has, I confess, destroyed the antiquity, the supremacy, and succession of the Catholic Church ; yet I cannot help thinking that she is the true Christian Church, because of her UNITY. She has always been of the same faith, and, like her Saviour, she " is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Whereas, Protestants are divided into almost innumerable sects.

Melancthon. What do you mean by " the same faith," O'Leary ?

O'Leary. I mean that the Catholic Church, whenever or wherever she has existed, has had but one faith, and has uniformly spoken the same language.

Melancthon. You are not the first, O'Leary, whom I have heard assert the same thing. It is excusable in you, because you are comparatively ignorant of ecclesiastical history, and have simply credited what your Priests have told you. But your Priests cannot be sufficiently reprobated for making such a statement. They

either know that the statement is false, or they do not : if they do not know it to be false, they are scandalously ignorant ; and if they do know it to be false, they are abominably wicked. The latter I believe to be the case, O'Leary : but whether they know it or not, I despair not of convincing you, that instead of uniformly holding the same opinions, (which they mean by the term " one faith,") and speaking the same language, as they pretend, their opinions and language are exceedingly diversified, and directly and flatly contradictory.

O'Leary. If your honour can do this, I shall be compelled to give up this strong-hold also.

Melancthon. There will be no merit, O'Leary, in dispossessing you of this strong-hold. To destroy it, requires no particular generalship, no train of artillery, no cannon of large caliber : a single musketeer is fully competent to take it not only out of your hands, but also out of the hands of its most zealous and acute defenders. Suppose I should prove that instead of speaking the same language, Catholics oppose Jesus Christ and the Apostles ; that Catholics oppose Catholics ; that Catholics oppose the Fathers ; that Catholics oppose Councils ; that Councils are opposed to each other ; that Councils oppose Popes, and that Popes oppose each other ;—suppose, I say, that I can prove all this, will you surrender the boasted unity of the Catholic Church ?

O'Leary. Indeed, your honour, I will.

Melancthon. Well, O'Leary, I undertake the task with great pleasure. St. Paul says, "Though even an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed: (Gal. i. 8 :) but Bellarmine, a Popish Cardinal, says, "If the Pope should err in commanding vices, and forbidding virtues, the Church were bound to believe vices to be good, and virtues to be evil." Jesus Christ says, "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren:" (Matt. xxiii. 8 :) but the Cardinal says, "All Christians and Ministers and Bishops are to be subject to the Pope." St. Paul says, "Prove all things:" (1 Thess. v. 21 :) whereas Bellarmine says, "A Christian ought to receive the Church's doctrine without examination." The Apostle Jude says, that they who are "sensual, have not the Spirit:" but Papists say, that the Spirit of God is always with the Popes, though "for one hundred and fifty years together," according to Genebrad, "the Popes were apostates, and not apostolics."

You perceive, O'Leary, that Jesus Christ and his Apostles are completely at issue with Cardinals of the Papal Church; and that, instead of a perfect union between them, they are as opposite as the poles to each other.

O'Leary. You astonish me. I shall thank you to go on.

Melancthon. I will, O'Leary, and show you how Papists differ among themselves. Alphonsus de Castro says, "A General Council rightly congregated, *cannot* err in the faith:" whereas Camerancis, another holy Father, affirms that "a General Council *may* err in the faith." Costerus says, "The decrees of General Councils have as much weight as the holy Gospel:" but Antonius affirms that "the saying of Jerome is to be preferred before the decree of a Council." Canus says, that "the common sense of the Fathers, in the exposition of Scripture, is a most certain argument to confirm theological assertions; for the sense of all those holy men is the sense of God's Spirit:" whereas the University of Doway asserts, that "there are many errors in the ancient Fathers, which we extenuate and excuse, and often, by some devised fiction, deny, and put a convenient sense upon, when opposed against us in disputations with our adversaries." The Jesuits affirm, that the will is determined to good actions, not by God's grace, but by its own inclination and agency; whilst, in direct opposition to them, the Jansenists and Dominicans assert this to be a gross falsity, and that the will is invariably determined by irresistible grace. Such, O'Leary, is the unity which exists among themselves.

O'Leary. You astonish me more and more, your honour. But pray proceed.

Melancthon. Nor is it enough, O'Leary, that they oppose the Bible and each other, but they also directly contradict the Fathers. Take for example the following instances. Clemens, a very ancient Father, says, "We do not believe the assertions of men; they must not only say, but prove, and that too from the Scriptures:" but Tannerus says, "The people are bound to be so subject to their Pastors, that if their Pastors should err, the people are bound to err with them." Austin says, "I have learned to give this honour and reverence to the books of Scripture, to believe there is no error in them; but as for others, how learned or godly soever they be, I so read them that I do not believe any thing to be true, because they thought so, but because they proved it to be so, from the Scriptures:" whereas Canus says, "In the exposition of holy Scripture, you are bound to believe your ancestors, though they give you no reason for it, and to defend whatsoever opinions you receive from them, of the law of faith and religion."

O'Leary. I begin to fear that I must also surrender the citadel of unity to your honour; and more than to suspect that the Priests have wickedly practised upon my credulity.

Melancthon. Your suspicion, O'Leary, is too well founded. When they boast of the unity of their Church, they know they are uttering a falsehood; but they calculate upon your inability to detect it. Such is their Jesuitism, that, to deceive, they, according to the doctrine of their famous University of Doway, never hesitate to have recourse to a "devised fiction." With them, O'Leary,

"'Tis only day-light that makes sin."

O'Leary. You have convinced me that the Catholics are against Christ and his Apostles; that they are against each other; and that they are against the Fathers; but can you produce any evidence of their being against the Fathers and Bishops when assembled in a General Council?

Melancthon. Yes, O'Leary, abundance of evidence: but as our conversation cannot be continued much longer, I shall furnish you with only two proofs. The Council of Basil decreed that, "if once that pernicious error were admitted, that General Councils may err, the whole Catholic faith would totter:" but Cameracensis says, "A General Council may err in the faith." The Jesuits say, that "infallibility resides not in a General Council, but in the Pope:" whereas the Councils of Basil and Constance affirm, that infallibility resides in a

Council, and not in the Pope. But it would be endless to produce all the instances of discord and direct opposition in which this pretendedly united Church abounds. Instead of the holy city being but of one faith, and speaking only one language, she is split into a diversity of jarring creeds, and is a perfect Babel of confusion. She teaches that there *is* a purgatory, and that there is no purgatory; that Transubstantiation was believed from Apostolic times, and that it *never* was an article of faith till the Council of Trent; that image worship is idolatrous, and that it promotes the instruction and edification of the faithful; that private confession to Priests is as old as Christianity, and that it was *not* practised in the primitive Church; that the Pope is, and is not, the supreme head of the universal Church; that the Virgin Mary was, and was not, born in sin; that the doctrine of predestination is, and is not, true. Such, O'Leary, is the boasted unity of the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as Popery is arrogantly and most impudently called by Papists. I could also produce many instances of Council opposing Council, and Pope opposing Pope; but having already proved that instead of this Church being united, she is notoriously disunited, and being weary of the din of war, which resounds in every street of this papistically holy city, and having also promised to hold some conversation with

you on the INFALLIBILITY of the Church, I shall omit these facts for the present.

O'Leary. It is not necessary that your honour should say one word more on the unity of the Church. I am convinced that though they do not renounce visible communion with each other, yet among them, as among Protestants, there are diverse and contrary opinions. But I shall be glad to hear your opinion of the infallibility of the Church.

Melancthon. What do you mean by infallibility, O'Leary?

O'Leary. I mean that the Church of Rome is infallible in all her decisions.

Melancthon. Do you mean that every individual member of the Church is infallible? or that all the Priests are infallible? or that the Bishops are infallible? or that Bishops assembled in Council are infallible? or that the Pope is infallible?

O'Leary. I feel at some loss how to answer your question. I cannot think that *all* the members are infallible, for many of them are profoundly ignorant, and very wicked; neither can I believe that *all* the Priests are infallible, for both intellectually and morally they are at a great distance from perfection; neither can I, for the same reasons, admit the Bishops, in their individual character, to be infallible. I suppose infallibility exists either in a General

Council, or in the Pope, or in both conjointly.

Melancthon. Suppose, O'Leary, that three hundred men were individually to say, "I don't know whether the moon is inhabited or not, for I am not in possession of evidence sufficient to enable me to decide on this subject with anything like infallible certainty:"—suppose, I say, that they were all equally uncertain upon this point when individually considered, would the mere circumstance of their being brought together, give certainty to their decision?

O'Leary. Most assuredly not.

Melancthon. Why?

O'Leary. Because it is quite impossible that three hundred uncertainties can ever make one certainty. It would not be more absurd to say that three hundred negatives make a positive, or that three hundred cyphers make a pound.

Melancthon. You are right, O'Leary. Well, now apply this to your Bishops assembled in Council. Individually, they are all fallible; but collectively, you seem to think them infallible. Is not this equal to saying that three hundred fallibles make one infallible? And is this less absurd than saying, that three hundred uncertainties make a certainty?

O'Leary. To be candid, I confess it is precisely the same. I wonder I never thought of this before. But then, your honour, if the

Pope be joined with the Council, will not this give infallibility to their decisions?

Melancthon. Are the decisions of the Pope infallible without confirmation by a General Council?

O'Leary. In the opinion of the majority of Catholics, I understand they are not; but when the Pope and Council agree, then they are infallible.

Melancthon. But, O'Leary, if the Pope be fallible when individually considered, and the Council be fallible when considered apart from the Pope, how can their union make them infallible, on any other principle than that two fallibles make one infallible?

O'Leary. I confess I don't know how to deny your conclusion. Yet, your honour, I have some imperfect recollection of an illustration which obviates this apparent difficulty. I think the writer illustrates the matter by a reference to the British constitution. O! now I have it. He says, the British constitution consists of King, Lords, and Commons: and adds, the King cannot legislate alone, nor the Lords alone, nor the Commons alone; but to legislate, requires the union of the whole. The acts of any of these separately would be powerless; but take them conjointly, and they become the law of the land.

Melancthon. I am afraid, O'Leary, that I am

rather dull of apprehension ; for I declare I cannot perceive how your illustration applies.

O'Leary. The application, your honour, is easy. It is simply this, that as neither King, Lords, nor Commons can legislate separately, but can legislate conjointly ; so, though the Pope and a General Council separately are fallible, yet when united they are infallible.

Melancthon. So, so, this is its application ! We are not speaking of power to legislate, or to do any thing else, but of infallibility, O'Leary. That the three estates of this kingdom can do in union what none of them can do separately, no one doubts, any more than we doubt that three men possess more physical power conjointly, than any one of them possesses separately. ' A multiplication of small powers will produce a great power ; but the great power and the small powers are of the same nature, and only differ in degree ; whereas fallibility and infallibility are directly opposite in nature, and therefore, however you multiply the former, you can never arrive at the latter. It is not more absurd to say that two blacks will make one white ; that two knaves will make an honest man ; or that two idiots will make a philosopher.

O'Leary. But your honour seems to forget that which is of the greatest importance :

Melancthon. What is that, O'Leary ?

O'Leary. That which renders the decisions

of a General Council infallibly true, is the plenary influence of the Holy Ghost, which influence governs all their decisions.

Melancthon. O no, O'Leary, I have not forgotten what Papists say on the subject. Are the decisions of the Holy Ghost always the same? or does he decide one way at one time, and in a directly opposite one at another?

O'Leary. Of course, always the same; for He is unchangeable, and therefore without variableness or shadow of turning.

Melancthon. You are right, O'Leary. God will never contradict himself. But General Councils, as I have shown, have contradicted themselves; therefore their decisions were not all of God. And if not all, we have no evidence that any of them were. But why do you think, O'Leary, that General Councils, or the Pope, are in all their decisions governed by the Holy Ghost?

O'Leary. Because St. Paul said, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God."* (Acts xx. 28.)

Melancthon. But this, O'Leary, was not addressed to a General Council, but to the Elders of the church at Ephesus: so that if infallibility is contained in this text, it gives infallibility to

* Papist Represented and Misrepresented, p. 19.

individual Elders, a thing which the most strenuous advocate of infallibility never pretended. But supposing it had been addressed to a General Council, it no more teaches the doctrine of infallibility than it teaches astronomy. It simply teaches that those holy men at Ephesus, were appointed by the Holy Spirit, to watch over and instruct the church in the doctrines of Christ, in which they themselves had been previously instructed. We know, O'Leary, that the Angel, that is, the Pastor or presiding Elder, of the church of Ephesus, instead of being infallible, actually did fall; (Rev. ii. 5;) as also did several other of the Asiatic churches. Is this the only text on which you build your doctrine of infallibility?

O'Leary. No, your honour: Father O'Flaherty gave me a book in which many other texts are quoted as most clearly teaching it, which, with your permission, I shall read. The first is, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 18.)

Melancthon. How do you prove infallibility from this text?

O'Leary. I prove it thus: I am told by my Priest, that

The name Peter signifies "a rock:"

But the church is built upon a rock:

Therefore, the church is built upon Peter.

Melancthon. This, I suppose, you call a syllogism; and I dare say, to the members of your Church, it is demonstration itself: yet, O'Leary, a man need not have the subtlety of Scotus to demonstrate its perfect futility. The church is indeed built upon a rock; but that Peter is not *that* rock, will appear from the following considerations. First: the word which our Lord uses when addressing Peter, is neither the same, nor of the same gender, which he employs when speaking of the foundation; the former being masculine, the latter feminine. The whole passage runs thus: "Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered, and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, (*Petros*,) and upon this rock (*Petra*) I will build my church:"—not upon *Petros*, or Peter, but upon the doctrine of the Messiahship and Divinity of Jesus, which Peter had professed. Secondly: Peter never represents himself as the foundation on which the church is built; but, on the contrary, he asserts Jesus Christ to be that foundation. (1 Peter ii. 6.) Thirdly: neither Paul, nor John, nor James, nor Jude, nor Luke the historian of the Acts of the

Apostles, nor any other New Testament writer, has in any one instance, either directly or indirectly, intimated any thing of the kind. Fourthly: but whilst Peter is no where stated to be the foundation, Jesus Christ is frequently so represented:—for instance, he is set forth as the “sure foundation in Zion,” Isaiah xxviii. 16; and as the only foundation, to the utter and eternal exclusion of all others, 1 Cor. iii. 11,—“Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Yes, O’Leary, He alone is “the rock of our salvation.” (Deut. xxxii. 15.)

O’Leary. Your honour really surprises me. I thought the doctrine of Peter’s infallibility was a rock which none could move; but you have already lifted it from its bed, and set it in motion.

Melancthon. Yes, O’Leary, and before we have done with it, we shall crumble this rock to powder. You have thought, O’Leary, that the church which can never be moved, was built upon Peter?

O’Leary. I have, your honour.

Melancthon. Suppose a foundation to fail, would the building upon it be secure?

O’Leary. Certainly not, your honour; the building in that case would fail also, and tumble to pieces.

Melancthon. But Peter failed. He fell, not

into venial sin, as your Priests foolishly speak, but into mortal sin; for he cursed and swore, and told lies, and denied Christ altogether. Do you think, O'Leary, if Peter had died in that state, that he would have been saved or lost?

O'Leary. If a man die in mortal sin, he must of course be lost; but if his sin be only venial, he will not be sent to hell, but to purgatory.

Melancthon. In my Dialogue on Purgatory, I have proved that this intermediate state is a heathenish fiction, and that the distinction between venial and mortal sin is both unscriptural and false. But suppose, for argument's sake, the distinction to be proper, under which head would you place cursing, and swearing, and telling lies?

O'Leary. I suppose under the head of mortal sins.

Melancthon. I suppose so too, O'Leary. Then, according to your own admission, had Peter died at that time, he would have been damned everlastingly. But if Peter be the foundation of the church, would not the church in this case have been damned everlastingly also? If the foundation be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?

O'Leary. But Peter was afterwards restored.

Melancthon. He was, O'Leary; but then, as he was the foundation of the church, the *whole* church, before he fell,—the whole church must have fallen also; unless you think that though a foundation sink into a quagmire fifty fathoms deep, the building may remain unshaken and entire, like a castle in the air.

O'Leary. I cannot believe that any building can stand if the foundation be removed.

Melancthon. Well, O'Leary, if you cannot believe this, you must give up the infallibility of your Church; for your Church is built upon Peter, who sunk into the quagmire of sin; and who, even after his restoration, rather played the Jesuit at Antioch, and, like the order of Ignatius, “dissembled,” for which the Apostle Paul faithfully reproved him. (Galatians ii. 11.) It should seem, O'Leary, that the Holy Ghost, foreseeing the manner in which Antichrist would pervert the words of Christ to Peter, has intentionally recorded these humbling facts in the life of Peter, as an antidote to such perversion.

O'Leary. But, your honour, this is not the only text by which our Priests attempt to prove the infallibility of the Catholic Church. There are several others, the principal of which are Matt. xxviii. 20; and John xiv. 16, 17, and xvi. 13. I should like to know how these can be expounded on any other principle than that of the infallibility of the Catholic Church.

Melancthon. The first of these stands in immediate connection with the commission which our Lord gave to his Apostles, and contains a promise of his presence with them to the end of the world, so long as they should teach the nations to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them,—a promise which has been fulfilled, not only to the Apostles, but also to all faithful Ministers of Christ to this day. But, O'Leary, this promise has no more application to the Papal Church, than it has to Alexander the Great; for that Church teaches, in multitudes of instances, what Christ never commanded his Apostles to teach: yea, more, it directly opposes Christ; as when it prohibits the reading of the Scriptures, which Christ expressly commands; (John v. 39;) and in its idolatrous worship of angels and saints, and graven images. In a former part of our conversation I have showed you that John xiv. 16, 17, cannot possibly have any application to the Papal Church, because many of the Popes, and Bishops, and Priests of that Church have been notoriously infamous for vice; whereas this promise is made only to those who love Christ and keep his commandments, and who are not of "the world," which "cannot receive the Spirit of truth." The last text to which you refer is our Lord's promise to the Apostles that the Spirit should guide them "into all truth;" for

which promise he commanded them to wait, (Acts. i. 4,) and which was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii.) The Holy Ghost made them fully acquainted with his divine will, and enabled them not only faithfully to preach and teach, but also, with the most perfect accuracy, to record that will for the instruction and edification of the church, to the end of the world. Do you now think, O'Leary, that the infallibility of your Church can be proved by these texts?

O'Leary. To be candid, your honour, I don't think it can. But I wish I had not had this conversation with you; for if the Catholic Church be not infallible, I cannot be certain whether she leads me right or wrong; whether she teaches me truth or error; whether I am in the way to heaven or to hell.

Melancthon. Exactly so, O'Leary, if the Papal Church be your only guide.

O'Leary. Why, your honour, what other guide can I have?

Melancthon. What guide had the Jews, O'Leary?

O'Leary. The Priests, your honour: hence it is written in the Prophet Malachi, that "the Priest's lips keep knowledge."

Melancthon. Did you ever read the passage you refer to, O'Leary?

O'Leary. No, your honour, I never did; but

Father O'Flaherty has repeated it to me frequently, to show me that the judgment of the great body of Priests is the only RULE OF FAITH.

Melancthon. But, O'Leary, there is no such text in Malachi, nor in any other part of the Bible. The passage you refer to is part of a very solemn address to the Jewish Priests of that day, and runs thus: "The Priest's lips *should* keep knowledge, and they *should* seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law." (Mal. ii. 7—9.) You see, O'Leary, that instead of the Priest's lips keeping knowledge, and seeking the law at the mouth of the Lord, they had done neither the one nor the other, but had wickedly "departed out of the way," and, like the Papal Church, had become "contemptible."

O'Leary. Your honour confounds me. I always thought that this text established, beyond the possibility of successful contradiction, the living ministry, or, as our Priests generally call it, "the living speaking authority," to be the only rule of the people's faith; but now I perceive,

instead of establishing, it overthrows it, for it distinctly proves that the Priests are not to be trusted.

Melancthon. It does, O'Leary; and I would advise you to trust *your* Priests no longer, but examine the Scripture for yourself, that unerring rule of faith and practice,—a rule which never varies, but is the same in every age and place. “To the law and to the testimony.” If what your Priests teach agrees with these, receive it; but if not, reject it, for then “there is no light in them.” Like the Bereans, O'Leary, search the Scriptures daily, that you may ascertain whether the doctrines of your Church are true or false.

O'Leary. Is then the written word the only rule of faith?

Melancthon. Yes, O'Leary; there is no other. Hence St. Paul says, “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Gal. i. 8.) The laws and doctrines of Christ are all contained in the New Testament, to which nothing must be added, and from which nothing must be taken away; for it is the finished revelation, or “perfect will of God.”

O'Leary. Then does your honour absolutely reject the Roman Catholic Church as the rule of faith?

Melancthon. Yes, O'Leary, I do; and for the following reasons:—First: because Peter, the pretended Bishop of Rome, though he wrote two catholic Epistles, gives no intimation to the Christian church, that the Church of Rome was to be the guide and rule of the church's faith: secondly, because Paul, instead of acknowledging Peter as the rule of his faith, charges him with dissimulation, and severely reproves him for it: thirdly, because neither Christ nor any of his Apostles makes any allusion to any such rule: fourthly, because there is no dependence on unwritten tradition, as I have fully proved in the Fourth Letter of my "Remarks on Tysan's Attack on Protestantism," to which I refer you: fifthly, because the Church of Rome has, as we have already shown, been infamous for vice, and notoriously erroneous and idolatrous,—a Church which contains every mark of Antichrist: and, lastly, because our Lord and his Apostles establish the Scriptures as our *only* rule. "Search the Scriptures," saith Jesus; (John v. 39;) "which," Paul says, "are able to make thee wise unto salvation." (2 Timothy iii. 15.)

O'Leary. But how can I know the meaning of Scripture without a living infallible interpreter?

Melancthon. I think, O'Leary, the estate on which you live is your own?

O'Leary. It is, your honour.

Melancthon. How do you know it to be yours, O'Leary?

O'Leary. Because I inherit it by the will of my father.

Melancthon. The will of your father! But how can you know that you don't entirely misunderstand the meaning of your father?

O'Leary. There is no difficulty in understanding my father's will, it is so very plain. He describes the situation, and extent, and nature of his bequest to me so accurately, that even a child might understand him.

Melancthon. You entertain the same opinion of your father's will, that Paul entertained of the holy Scriptures, which he said Timothy had known from a child. Do you think, O'Leary, that from a child Timothy did know the holy Scriptures?

O'Leary. I think Paul would not have said so, if he had not.

Melancthon. But if Timothy knew the holy Scriptures, why may not you? Their facts, and doctrines, and duties, and privileges, are all written in language so plain, that you are as capable of understanding them as ever he was.

O'Leary. But if they are so plain and easy to be understood, how is it that there are so many different opinions entertained by those who make the Bible their rule?

Melancthon. I might answer this question by

asking another,—How is it that there is such diversity and contrariety of opinion in the Papal Church, which makes the “living speaking authority” the rule? For this Church; notwithstanding all its boasted and impudent pretensions to oneness or unity, I have already abundantly proved to contain a heterogeneous mass of conflicting and opposing opinions. But waiving this *argumentum ad hominem*, your question, though by Papists in general considered unanswerable, is not very difficult of solution. You say, your father’s will *may*, because it is plain, *easily* be understood: but suppose you had never read it, would you have understood it?

O’Leary. Certainly not.

Melancthon. Or suppose you had merely glanced at it, reading only a line or two, here and there?

O’Leary. Then I could not have become acquainted with it.

Melancthon. Or suppose you had read it merely to ascertain whether a particular field was arable or pasture, or what was the geological character of its northern extremity?

O’Leary. In that case I should have obtained information on these particulars, but very little more.

Melancthon. Or suppose you had read it under the influence of strong prejudice against

a particular field in it, with an earnest desire to add a neighbouring field to it?

O'Leary. Under such an influence I might possibly have supposed my father to intend what I desired; and then have conjectured that my father's amanuensis either had omitted a word or two, the insertion of which would have made the will quite another thing; or that he had constructed a sentence or two inaccurately, which, by a single transposition, would have made the will exactly according to my mind.

Melancthon. Exactly so, O'Leary. These causes, though your father's will is very plain, would effectually hinder you from understanding it. Now, all these causes operate against the right understanding of God's WILL,—the holy Scriptures. There are many persons who, to the scandal of the Protestant name, never read them. There are others who never read them either attentively or consecutively. Some read them merely to ascertain a particular fact, or to discover a particular doctrine; whilst others read them with a previously fixed hypothesis, to which they are resolved to make the Scriptures bend. In addition to which, O'Leary, no man can have a correct knowledge of many parts of the holy Scriptures, but he who is willing to yield his heart to their unsophisticated impression: he who would "know whether the doctrine is of God," must "do His will." (John

vii. 17.) All who comply with this condition, however they may differ on some minor points, (and such differences there were in apostolic times, —differences originating not in the heart, but in the head, and arising not from moral but from mental or physical causes, in reference to which St. Paul decided nothing authoritatively, but, in the true spirit of Christian liberality, said, “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,” Rom. xiv. 5; and, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth,” Rom. xiv. 4,)—however, I say, those who diligently study God’s word with a sincere desire to do his will, may differ on minor points, on all the great duties of practical and experimental Christianity they will be found to agree. A docile and devotional reference to this rule will have a transforming influence: “beholding the glory of the Lord” in this divine glass, they will be “changed into the same image from glory to glory.” (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

O’Leary. I thank you for the information you have given me, and do most unfeignedly express my obligations to your honour, for having completely delivered me from those absurd, irrational, and unscriptural notions of the antiquity, supremacy, succession, unity, infallibility, and “living speaking authority” of the Roman Catholic Church. Henceforth, instead

of being duped by the dogmas of the Priests, I will test all they teach by the law and the testimony.

Melancthon. So long as you continue to hear them, do so; but if you regard the favour of God, and are resolved to receive His word as your only directory, you cannot remain under their deceptive instruction; for hear what St. John says of the Papal Church, the apocalyptic Babylon: "I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." (Rev. xviii. 4, 5.) I rejoice, O'Leary, in having been at all instrumental in rescuing you from error. Allow me now, in conclusion, to say to you what St. Paul said to the Ephesians: "You were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as a child of light: proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Ephes. v. 8, 10, 11.)



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